

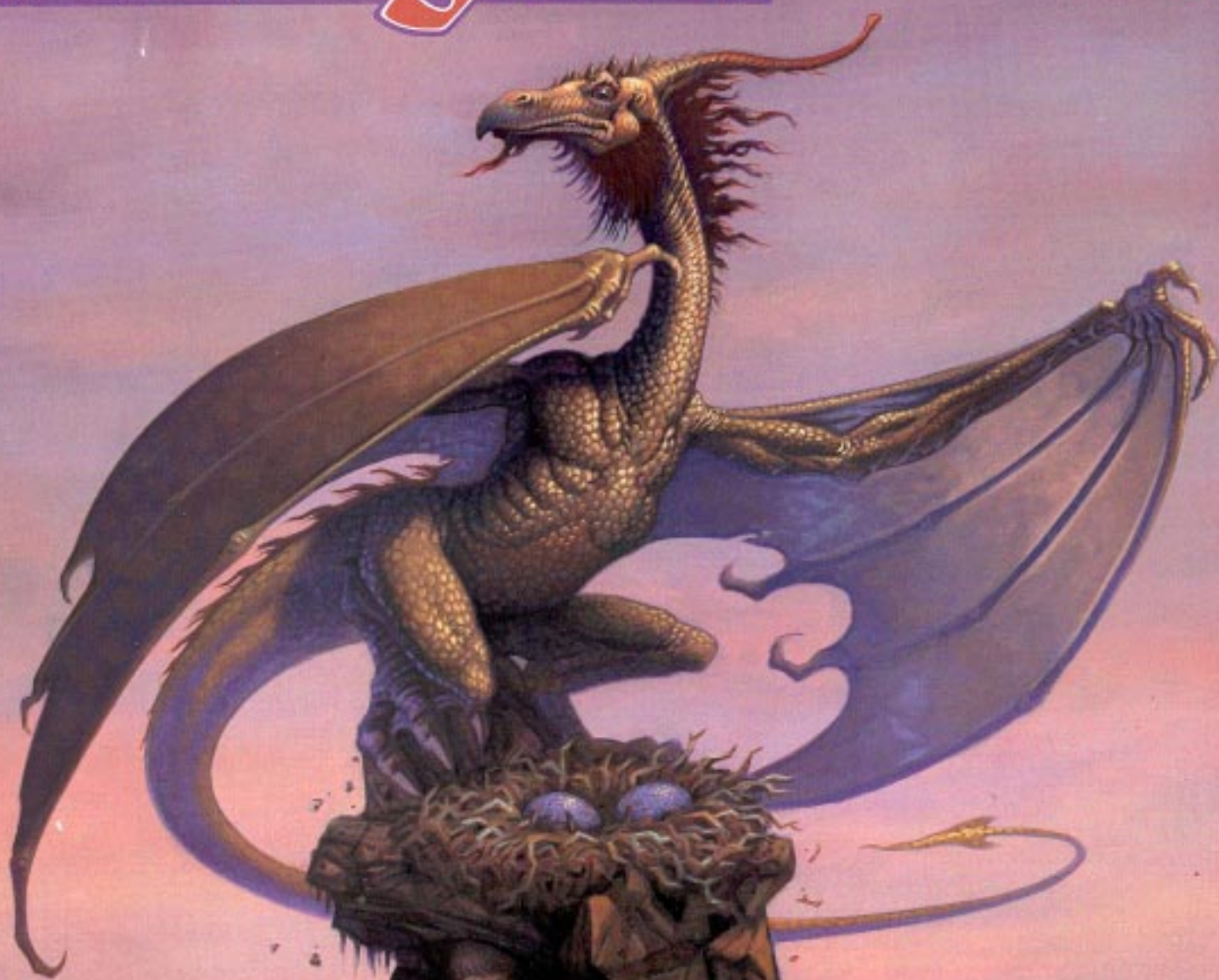
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COVER

In the nick of time, Gerald Brom (a recent full-time addition to the artists' staff of TSR, Inc.) produced a painting for our cover, a portrait that he just had sitting around. "Dragon's Nest" reveals the primary hazard of acquiring a dragon's egg: dealing with the mother dragon.

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

"Best of" fever

Dear Dragon:

I've been an avid reader of this magazine for seven years now. I love all of the articles and input from the many who read and research with it. I have collected a lot of the issues from #100 on, but I've been waiting for The Best of DRAGON Magazine anthology, volume VI. . . . Can you tell me when I can expect it, or if there is even going to be one?

We have been discussing the possibility of another "Best of" anthology, but we have not been able to get it approved for our product schedule. However, it's still being kicked around. If you would like to see volume VI, then by all means write to us and tell us what you would like for it to contain: Monsters? Magical items? New spells? Special articles for DMs? Some of your own favorite articles? Be specific when you write. The more letters we get, the better the chances are that a new "Best of" will appear!

Eco-diskettes?

Dear Dragon:

I am writing in response to the letter asking if you would put the magazine on diskettes instead of on paper [in issue #153]. Your response to this question was typical. Sure, it may be easier to continue to ship the magazine as it is not so much because, as you put it, "you don't have to plug in your computer to read each issue," but because the cost of doing it would be more than you would be willing to spend. This is the attitude that makes the rain forest what it is today—that being depleted. For if you would start putting the magazine on disk, this would help to save this planet we are on. It goes that we can't go out and build another one. And just think of how many trees would be saved if other magazines would do the same. I know if we recycled, this too would help. But what I am saying is that the less paper we use in the first place, the better. I sure would like to go to a totally paperless workplace.

Ronnie Cook
Columbus GA

I noticed that you sent your letter to me on paper, which indicates that you haven't fully thought out the implications of what you are saying. Briefly, paper is a more durable medium than the computer diskette; magnetic fields and computer crashes will not harm your reading

enjoyment of a paper magazine, which can be shared with the public at large. We haven't investigated the cost involved in producing a diskette magazine simply because we have no interest in limiting our audience to those who use computers. For which computer systems should we program those diskettes? And how could advertisers (who do help pay our bills) use the diskette for advertising? I, too, would like to go to a paperless workplace, but paper is easily made, easily used, and easily disposed of—and, unlike a computer diskette, paper is biodegradable. Finally, you must know that in order to produce the massive amounts of power required to construct and operate computer systems (among other modern appliances), you must have power companies and all the ecological problems that go with them, not to mention the production processes involved in making both computers and their little diskettes. You can plant trees to make more paper. You cannot plant petroleum or ores to make more diskettes.

I completely missed your connection between the rain forests (which are being destroyed to provide farmland) and producing the magazine on diskette, or how this would save the planet, but what the heck. Your enthusiasm for ecology is good, but a little more research would help.

How do umber hulks smell?*

Dear Dragon:

I was just rereading "The Ecology of the UMBER HULK," by Tony Jones in issue #152. The article was very good and quite informative, but I noticed something that I believe may have been a mistake. Early in the article, Mr. Jones states that the "creature lacks a nose but breathes through gill-like structures on its almost nonexistent neck." However, later in the article, he claims that like "most underground creatures, umber hulks have more highly developed senses of smell . . . than eyesight." How is this possible? And if they do have some way of "smelling," what is the range of this sense?

Niv Goldberg
Lexington VA

Hmm. We hadn't thought about that while we were editing the article, but there is really no reason why a creature could not have olfactory receptors around its gill openings. The range of any olfactory sense, however, is your immediate area. If you can smell chlorine gas, for example, you're standing in it. The source of an odor you detect can be at any range so long as the odor is potent enough to be detected or your nose is sensitive enough to find it. Wind velocity, your health, and the presence of other odors will affect your ability to detect odors as well.

* They smell terrible! (an old gnomish joke)

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FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

I confess I'm completely baffled by Michael Griffith's letter in issue #154. I can't see anything at all evil about the tactic he describes. In football, it's known as "looking off" your receivers: A quarterback will look at one receiver, hoping the defensive backs will read his eyes and not worry so much about the other receivers; then the quarterback suddenly turns and throws to someone else. Joe Montana gave an excellent demonstration of the tactic in this year's Super Bowl. Are all great quarterbacks who do this necessarily evil? Another similar situation is when a prisoner pretends to be asleep, hoping the guard bringing his supper will get careless. What's evil about that? If people who play good characters in Mr. Griffith's game are forced to renounce all such misdirection tactics, they must be real pushovers in a fight.

Ralph Sizer
Providence RI

I am writing in response to Eric Oppen's article, "The Making of a Paladin," in issue #154. I agreed with and enjoyed reading his views of the training and lives of paladins, except for one paragraph. Personally, I cannot believe a lawful-good cleric would animate corpses in order to better instruct paladins or even clerics on the strengths and weaknesses of such monsters, regardless of whose permission the cleric obtains. Wouldn't it be better to take the students on a field trip to a haunted house? At least this way the cleric will not be looked upon with disfavor from his deity for not letting those who have passed away rest in peace. The third-level cleric spell, animate *dead*, from the 1st Edition *Players Handbook*, states, "The act of animating dead is not basically a good one, and it must be used with careful consideration and good reason by clerics of *good* alignment." But the 2nd Edition *Players Handbook* clearly points out, "Casting this spell is not a good act, and only evil priests use it frequently." Let the students adventure. There's no better way than to let them get "hands-on" experience in the real *fantasy* world!

Brian Smarker
Kansas City MO

I'm writing this letter in response to several articles in "The Art of Making War" section of issue #154. The articles I wish to comment on are those by Dan Salas entitled "For King and Country," and by Thomas M. Kane entitled "How to Win Wars and Influence People."

Mr. Salas claimed to base his article on the Roman Army, but I am sure that no Roman would have recognized it as such. For example, he says: "Marching troops travel in defensive formations, usually in a column no more than

20 men wide . . ." Twenty men wide? Such a column would need a roadway 20 yards wide at the minimum, and any attempt to make a turn would be very difficult. If anyone has ever marched in a company front formation used by modern armies for formal parades or has watched marching bands will know just how hard it is to turn a wide column. Given the condition of roads in a medieval society, a column front of two or three men is all that was possible. The entire military art of moving troops up until the invention of breach-loading firearms consisted of deploying from such a column to a line of battle as quickly as possible. Usually this was done by having the column do a right or left turn into line. Marching in step makes this much easier, of course, which is why the Greeks learned to do this back before the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.). No, Mr. Kane, Frederick the Great did not develop cadence step. The Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, the Medieval Swiss, the Swedes, and the English (just to name a few) were all using cadence step before Frederick the Great was born.

Another flaw in both articles is each author's attempt to fix certain attitudes or formations without understanding the historical base. For example, Mr. Salas sets (using some Roman terms) the size of a squad at 10 men, a half-century at 50, and a century at 100. Now it is true that the Latin word *centuria*, from which "century" comes, means 100; but in my dictionary it is defined, in its military usage, only as a subdivision of a legion. By the late republican period of Rome, the century had become a subdivision of a maniple, which consisted of 120 men. Given the way in which infantry armies had to form for battle and the problems of controlling troops on the march, a formation of 60 men in a century makes more sense than one of 50, because you can divide 60 by 4, 3, or 2, and still get an even number. This makes it easy to set up a march column with a front of either two or three men and keep the entire unit together either in column or line. I should note that the Romans used an infantry block with a front of 10 men in six ranks. I should not be too hard on Mr. Salas in this respect. Almost every article I have seen in *DRAGON Magazine* on military organization overlooks the battle formations used by the troops and the reasons why those formations were used, and thus misses the reasons behind the formation of units above squad size. In armies fighting with hand-held weapons, corporals commanded squads and were part of the rank and file; their number should, when divided by four, come out with an even number. This arrangement simplifies the deployment from column into line as an army moves into battle. Any other system of formation leaves the commander with the problem of what to do with unit remainders while maintaining tactical cohesion.

There are also attitudes in the articles by Mr. Salas and Mr. Kane I have to comment on. I think Mr. Salas should have read Julius Caesar's *Gallie War* before he said that "the recruits are put through several weeks of basic training." In his book, Caesar at one point remarks of certain soldiers, while discussing a battle, "they being recruits of less than five years' training, I left them to guard the baggage." It takes a long, long time to train soldiers. When I was in the U.S.

service, basic infantry training took 16 weeks and was followed by some sort of advanced training lasting from 8 to 24 weeks more before the soldier was considered ready for duty in a tactical unit. As recently as the start of this century, the U.S. Army figured it took about 9 months to train a soldier. In the Civil War it took two years to train men without prior experience in horsemanship for cavalry service. This figure did, however, include unit training.

I would also like to know where Mr. Salas got his ideas about punishments and rewards. At one point he talks about dragging as inflicting 1-4 hp damage per hour. As for rewards, medals were not given to officers until the 19th century, and enlisted men didn't start getting them until the 20th century. With respect to looting, it was the prerogative of the soldier in European armies, and was often considered a basic part of his pay until after the time of Gustavus II (1594-1632); it continued in the form of prize money in the U.S. Naval services until 1898.

Mr. Kane is long on theory but in error on some facts. He says: "a king's noble vassals would never . . . dishonor themselves by fighting on foot." I suggest that Mr. Kane needs to add Henry Dwight Sedgwick's *The Black Prince*, a biography of Edward, Prince of Wales, to his bibliography. The French knights had trouble fighting on foot at times, but this certainly did not apply to the English. Also, in speaking about infantry, he overlooked the talents in this kind of warfare displayed by the Swiss, the Scots, the Welsh, the Germans, and the Spanish during the medieval period. Another book to read is B. H. Liddell Hart's *Strategy*.

James S. Watson
Madison WI

I would like to add to the bibliography of Thomas Kane's "All in the Family" (issue #153), especially as some of these works are easier to locate than those referenced in the article—it took a specialist in used books six months to locate a copy of *Shield and Crest*, whereas most of the books in the list that follows were obtained via Barnes & Noble or similar clearance catalogs during the past few years.

Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* London: Orbis Publishing Limited, 1985 (original copyright 1909).

Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *The Art of Heraldry* London: Bloomsbury Books, 1986 (original copyright 1904).

Friar, Stephen. *A Dictionary of Heraldry*. New York: Harmony Books (a division of Crown Publishers, Inc.), 1987.

von Volborth, Carl-Alexander. *The Art of Heraldry* Poole, Dorset, England: Blandford Press, 1987.

Woodcock, Thomas, and John Martin Robinson. *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Either of Fox-Davies's works would serve as a reference to the art. The "revision" of the *Complete Guide* consists of footnotes pointing out errors or differences from current practice. The Dictionary, while quite complete, is not suitable as a text. *The Art of Heraldry* (von Volborth's) and the *Oxford Guide* offer historical perspectives on the

Continued on page 28



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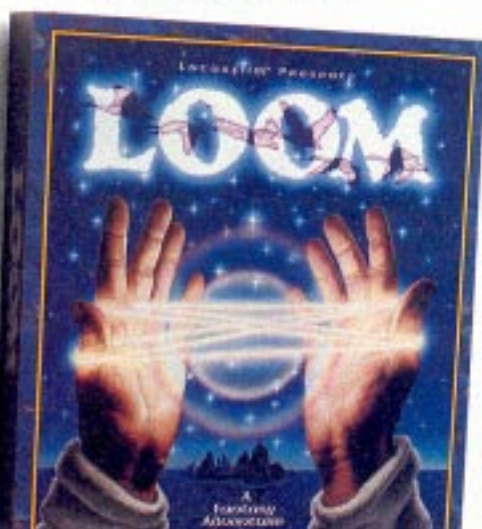
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The Game Wizards

Angry Mothers, part 2: Revenge of the readers

by James M. Ward

From the American Heritage Dictionary, we have the following:

flood v. 1. To cover or submerge with ...; inundate. 2. To fill with an abundance or an excess.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I don't know if you can call 91 + letters a flood, but I think the definition fits in this case. These letters all came in response to "The Game Wizards" column on angry mothers in DRAGON® issue #154 (and they are still coming in at the rate of four letters a day). Before I get into the meat of this column, I would like to share a few of the comments made by DRAGON Magazine readers.

A. Van Valin writes, "When I have children and they are old enough, I'll start them on AD&D [games]. I hope it will be a rich experience for them, unfettered by the visions of somebody else's mother."

Jim Laubacker writes, "[Could TSR publish] an 'Outer Planes' *Monstrous Compendium*, including demons and devils? . . . [or invent] new other-plane monsters with designs on the Prime Material? . . . Don't call them demons and devils, and don't make them sound like demons and devils."

Paul Astle writes, "I cannot help but feel that there is a degree of loyalty that should be shown to the players of the game who have stood by TSR and, on occasion, have had to face down, in a very literal way, these same demon-bashing, evangelistic, close-minded boors. . . ."

David E. Cates writes, "In bending over backwards to the wishes of people who know nothing about the game, [Jim Ward] showed a total lack of consideration to the customer. Another triumph for a small but rabid minority group."

John McCash writes, "You might as well have reduced the entire column to three words: 'We Cave In!!!' There, that feels much better."

William A. Nolan writes, "By the way, I would not have objected if you had said, 'We did not put demons and devils into the 2nd Edition [*Monstrous Compendium*] because we find them to be objectionable.' That isn't censorship. It only becomes censorship when an outside group dictates to you (successfully, in this case) what you should print."

Maurice Stratton writes, "Never in my life has any of my friends brought his mommy with him to check a module to see if any demons or devils were mentioned."

Jim O'Brien writes, "It is not that we, the gamers, cannot pick and choose what bits



Artwork by David Trampier

of the first edition we still like and incorporate them into our second-edition game. It is not that we even have to use the second edition. It is (pardon the cliché) the principle"

Lastly, I received a wonderful statement from the following people: E. R. Buzzard, B.A.; J. G. Harrison, M.D.; D. Lindsay, U.S. Army; B. M. Muncher, U.S. Navy; J. B. White, Ph.D. (almost); and A. M. Velotas, B.A.: "[Jim Ward] notes the transition from 'hack and slash to 'save the princess' adventures. The addition of demons and devils provides an excellent backdrop to save not just a princess, but a world."

So, where does that leave us? It leaves me very impressed with DRAGON Magazine's readers. All of the letters were very well written and to the point. About 95% of them covered the same topic, the censoring of demons and devils in the game. Many of these letters offered the same solution to this situation—a plan that TSR has already put into effect. In January 1991, TSR will print an interplanar *Monstrous Compendium*. It will be a binder with 96 pages of interplanar beings with unusual powers, most of those creatures being evil or chaotic in nature. I am fairly sure that they will solve the problem that almost all of the letter writers have taken the time to address.

The bottom line on the topic of "angry mothers" is that TSR can uphold the concepts of goodness winning over evil and the cause of right versus might, just as long as we don't take the fun and interest out of the game. And we won't.

Since I am on the topic of things in the future, I thought I would name a few products that TSR would come out with in 1991. Doug Niles has written a wonderful series of FORGOTTEN REALMS™ books set in an Aztec world, and we are going to let him write a Maztica boxed rules set. Jeff Grubb, the lead designer of the SPELLJAMMER™ game series, will be creating another boxed set for that campaign world. Bruce Nesmith, the lead designer of the RAVENLOFT™ series, will help create a series of products including a RAVENLOFT *Monstrous Compendium* filled with creatures that do more than go bump in the night. Steve Winter is going to redevelop the psionics rules for the AD&D 2nd Edition game and help create *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. TSR is also coming out with an entirely new AD&D campaign world, but I don't want to deal with that just yet except to say that I am very impressed with the concept.

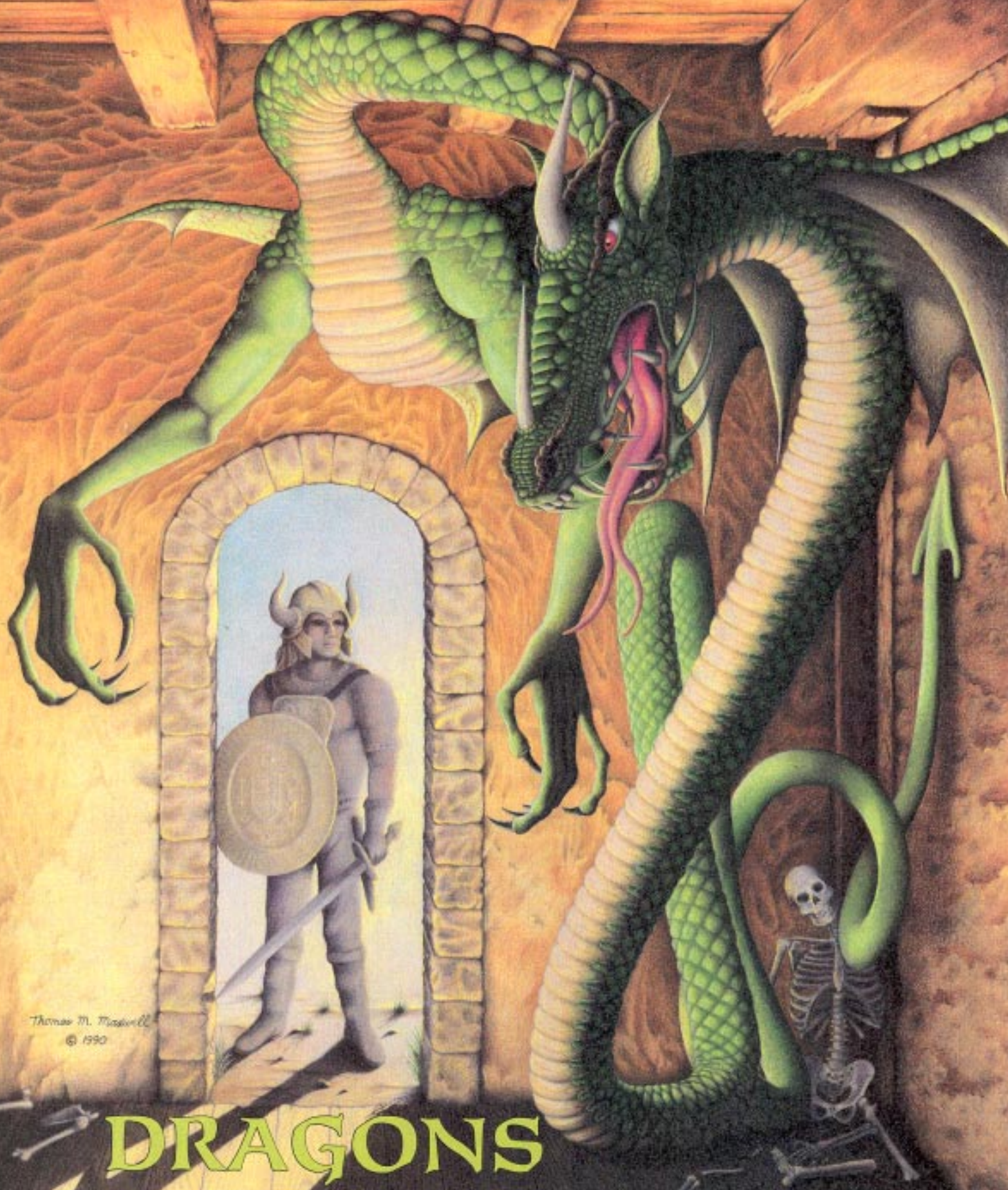
The D&D® game will soon have its new *Hollow Earth* campaign set, and work will be started on several other important D&D rules sets. The BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game will have several fascinating new products, including a hardbound book, novels, and more information on the inner worlds of the solar system. The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game will get a facelift and have its Basic Set redone. In the SPI™ line, TSR will print a Pacific War board game. The book department will put out its usual number of fine selections in the FORGOTTEN REALMS and DRAGONLANCE® saga areas; there will also be SPELLJAMMER™ novels for the first time.

The year 1991 promises to be an exciting and entertaining one for the designers and editors of TSR as well as the players of TSR's role-playing games. As time goes on, I will give you more detail on the schedule, but this gives you a taste of what TSR is putting together.

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We've Waited For You.



Thomas M. Messerell
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DRAGONS



Artwork by Randy Partridge

The Mightiest of DRAGONS



D&D® game dragons have their own rulers, too

by George Ziets

From the very start of a player's D&D® game experience, his ultimate foe is the dragon. Dragons have the greatest number of hit points, the most powerful combat abilities, and most important, the biggest treasure hoards.

Then there comes a time, as characters reach 20th level or so, when whomping a 160-hp huge red dragon in just five combat rounds isn't what it used to be. So the heroes go on to the next best thing: the dragon rulers. Using whatever methods are available to them, characters travel to the home plane of a dragon ruler and challenge it. Of course, they find themselves hopelessly outclassed. But no matter, think the players. Some of the heroes are bound to escape, and escape they do, especially since players like to take out the Lawful ruler, Diamond the Star Dragon, first. Not only is it the most powerful, it doesn't send 4,000 red dragons in pursuit of the fleeing party.

So the characters rest, recover, go on some more adventures, and maybe even take a side trip to the home of their favorite Immortal, who gets them started on a quest for Immortality. But inevitably, the greedy players look back toward their old nemesis, the dragon ruler. For if there is one creature less forgetful than the elephant, it is the D&D game player.

The characters will find some crafty way of luring the dragon ruler out of its home plane to an ambush point where a small army of compatriots await, along with several hundred magical items and whatever else the party can get its hands on. Needless to say, the dragon ruler will give them quite a fight anyway, and if the characters win, they will be a whole lot poorer (and angrier, when they discover that dragon rulers do not carry their treasure hoards with them when they travel).

The question remains: Why do players even bother to go through with this? Probably it is because they see something more powerful than themselves and so have that irrepressible urge to destroy it. And what does it accomplish? Nothing, other than to turn these interesting creatures into lists of statistics. But what if you told those same players that the dragon rulers could be allies as well as enemies?

"What?!" they would probably exclaim. "Dragons as allies? I'd sooner play strip poker with a kobold!" In doing so, they are

falling right into the ancient trap that role-players always fall for. They have lost the old thrill of role-playing and only want treasure and experience out of adventures.

So how can these dragon rulers, the ultimate challenges but also excellent role-playing opportunities for players and DMs, be revived? First, something more must be known about these noble beasts and their home planes, known as the Draconian Cluster. The statistics for the dragon rulers are given in the *Master DM's Book*, pages 28-29, and in the *DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 39. The Draconian Cluster is detailed herein.

The Draconian Cluster

The home planes of the Dragons are part of the Outer Planes. They are four-dimensional Standard Planes. All have guardians near their edges so as to keep out all nondragons. However, each is very different from the others.

Pearl: The Moon Dragon's plane is a nightmarish place—twisted, black, and evil, with no specific form. Gray towers rise up from the tops of craggy ebony mountains or lie in cold dark seas. There is no individualism, and a dragon spirit's desire to sacrifice itself for its leader is greater than ever here. Of all the rulers, Pearl could be termed the most evil, though even it yields to the Great One.

As the weakest of the dragon rulers, the Moon Dragon finds it necessary to surround itself with inhospitable conditions, ever suspicious—as is its nature—of the other dragon rulers. Characters on this Chaotic plane find their worst nightmares confronting them, for the plane feeds off of the minds of those who enter it. A warrior who lacks a magical weapon will find himself challenged by some beast that can be harmed by only such a weapon. A group whose cleric has died will be attacked by swarms of undead. The plane preys on party members' fears and acts on those fears. Many a brave adventurer has been reduced to a blubbing madman by the horrors encountered here. Only dragons are immune to these effects. Specifics of such encounters are left up to the DM, but as a general rule the guardians conjured up in the Moon Dragon's plane should not be impossible to defeat, as Pearl prefers to personally challenge especially formidable enemies (those able to survive the many perils of his plane). In

any event, it should be a significantly difficult trek to the Moon Dragon's lair.

The Moon Dragon lives in a huge black tower at the center of the Plane. Pearl usually does not receive guests and is guarded by thousands of dragon spirits. The spirits of this plane are more likely to attack all nondragon or nondraeden visitors than those of any other plane.

Opal: It is never day or night on the plane of Opal, lord of the neutral dragons. This plane is a dark cave network stretching through tunnel after tunnel, and only the Sun Dragon knows all the secret ways of this home. Here independence is stressed, but all dragons obey the mighty will of Opal.

In the cave networks of the Sun Dragon's home plane, characters quickly become lost unless they have a dragon guide or some magical means of finding their way. Dragon spirits met will be on business of their own and will usually have no interest in attacking or even speaking to intruders. The Sun Dragon passes the time in the center of this maze of caverns and tunnels, pondering mysteries and speaking with subordinates about the ever-important Balance. Should characters interrupt Opal, there is a 50% chance he will respond favorably to his visitors (but if he doesn't . . .). Even if the Sun Dragon agrees to speak with adventurers, there is no guarantee he will help them or speak to them again, for Opal has an extremely changeable personality.

Diamond: In the vast palace of Diamond, the Star Dragon, pure order and good hold sway, with every dragon spirit having a job to do. There are always guests in Diamonds shining palace, be they powerful Immortals or Archons. The Star Dragon itself sits on a huge throne of platinum and receives all visitors civilly, though Chaos is not tolerated and those who oppose Law are kindly, but forcefully, made to leave.

The Star Dragon's plane is the most welcoming to visitors. Dragon spirits here exist to serve the guests of Diamond. When characters arrive, they will inevitably be discovered by one of the many dragon spirit guards in the citadel and observed to determine their dispositions. Should the visitors prove hostile, hundreds of Lawful dragon spirits descend on them, more to drive them out than to kill them. However, if trespassers do nothing to

arouse suspicion, the spirits greet them and provide an escort to the throne room of Diamond, where they are asked their business. Though the Star Dragon rarely grants requests personally, he is glad to send a servant to aid in the forwarding of a Lawful cause, should it prove to be significant. Outside the palace are vast golden fields where other dragon spirits live when they are awaiting their turns to serve Diamond in his palace.

The Great Dragon: None dare oppose the Great One in its seemingly infinite home, a boundless waste that can form itself into any arrangement according to the whims of its ruler. The Great Dragon's servants are the most noble of all dragons, the mightiest and the most feared. It is an unparalleled honor to be called to serve this being. None may enter this plane without the Great One's bidding, and none may find the Great One unless it wishes to be found.

It is nearly impossible to gain access to the home plane of the Great Dragon. Unlike most Outer Planes, entrance into it is only possible through one of the other three planes of the Draconian Cluster. Of course, the Great One itself may enter its realm wherever and whenever it wishes. The plane is a strange gray land, with relatively few encounters with dragon spirits. Those that are met are the most powerful of their kind, however, and they attack those who are not expected by the Great Dragon. Draedens (*DM's Guide to Immortals*, pages 38-39) may also be encountered here, coming or going from audiences with the Great One. Such an audience for a mortal creature is a great honor, given only to the most powerful adventurers. The description given of the Great One by those who have seen it varies greatly. It seems that it can change its appearance at will, becoming any type of dragon as well as a human, demihuman, or any other creature.

The Cluster: The Draconian Cluster is arranged so that the three lesser planes surround the Great One's home plane, making it inaccessible from the Astral Plane. In order to reach the Great Dragon's plane, one must simply continue to travel in one specific direction through one of the lesser planes until the landscape inevitably changes into dull waste. This is difficult to do from the Sun Dragon's plane of evertwisting tunnels, but on Pearl's or Diamonds planes it is marginally easier. There is no set border between the lesser planes and the greater one.

Magic (both clerical and magic-user) functions strangely in the Draconian Cluster. On the lesser planes, magic of the first level does not function at all, probably because these planes are so ancient that they repel such weak enchantments. The same is true for second- and third-level clerical spells and second-, third-, and fourth-level magic-user spells on the Great One's plane. Also, any magic that changes the nature of an area, such as *earthquake*

or *summon weather* simply will not work in the Cluster, as the enchantments that created these planes are too powerful to be so altered.

All of the dragon rulers have treasure, of course. These vast hoards of gold and magical items are kept in extremely safe locations, guarded almost as carefully as the rulers themselves by traps and dragon spirits. Should greedy adventurers somehow steal this treasure, they will find themselves pursued to the ends of the Multiverse, especially if the treasure was stolen from the covetous Moon Dragon.

But even dragons die

In their might and glory, even the mighty dragon rulers sometimes fall victim to some party of adventurers or Immortals. In such a rare occasion, some sages have compiled what they know to form a theory about what the dragons do when their leaders die. Of course, much of this theory is based on speculation, but some are beginning to believe that the rulers are not offspring of the Great One, but were once average dragons themselves!

From what has been seen and heard following the alleged death of the Sun Dragon several centuries ago, it is said that thousands of neutral dragons fought in the presence of the Great One for Opal's position. Supposedly these battles lasted for an entire year, but they were subduing battles, so that no candidate was killed. It is true that the sightings of neutral dragons were decreased that year, but this could well be luck or coincidence. After this time, sages believe a new Sun Dragon was chosen, though nothing is known about how the winner of the contests was given the power of his predecessor.

A similar circumstance was recorded in ancient scrolls of nearly 2,000 years ago. This time, however, it was the Moon Dragon's position that was fought for. The scrolls say that the former Moon Dragon had not died, but had lost favor with the Great One or had somehow forfeited its position, which seems to suggest that the Great One has something to do with the vesting of power in prospective dragon rulers.

In an even more unclear story, handed down for centuries by certain Alpathian sages and hinted at in the writings of the dracologists of Glantri, the Great Dragon himself was killed in some sort of dispute with Immortals of Entropy. It is said that the three dragon rulers competed for the Great One's position during this time. While there was no Great Dragon, there was no order on the planes of the dragons; open war raged across the Draconian Cluster for a century, with the only rule being that the survivor would win. In the end, no one knows which of the dragons actually became the new Great One, but some of the most ancient Immortals say that there was a ceremony near the Dimensional Vortex for the winner. In this little-known meeting, draedens were also

said to have attended. However, even the Immortals know nothing more of this ceremony, except that the Great Dragon never showed any alignment tendencies after coming to power, so that whatever goes on during the ceremony must somehow affect the dragon ruler's mind.

Campaign involvement

Entire campaigns may be created using the information given here. It is up to the individual DM to flesh out the specifics of each dragon ruler's culture and personality, as well as its plans and goals (and how the characters fit in).

The best way to get a group of players interested in a campaign is to involve them in a large-scale struggle from the game's beginning. A 1st-level party may stumble into a dragon ruler's plans in their first adventure, unwittingly committing themselves to an action-filled campaign in which they could easily remain embroiled until they reach Immortality.

The dragon rulers themselves rarely go forth from their planes, as it is generally against their code of ethics. The Moon Dragon is the most likely ruler to involve itself in world affairs. But the rulers may leave their planes on occasion, sometimes to seek help from powerful characters or Immortals against some enemy to dragon-kind. Conflict is not permitted against another dragon ruler, for the Great One prohibits open fighting among them (unless, of course, the Great One dies). The Great Dragon himself has never been known to leave his plane or seek help from any being, but depending on the nature of the threat, this could change.

The dragon rulers are especially interested in extraordinarily powerful characters. Those seeking Immortality for the first (or second) time may find the attention of powerful beings focused on them. The rulers may have any reason for this, but the most likely one is that since dragons existed at the beginning of the Multiverse, they are curious about what the "great experiment" will yield. Curiosity is, after all, at the heart of dragons' natures.

Adventurers may also stumble upon a secret ceremony conducted by a dragon ruler. Should the adventurers be so indiscrete and also be discovered, you can be assured that some dragons will not rest until the characters are silenced. As for what a curious party may discover, the inventive DM could think of any number of secrets that dragons believe sacred (and far too important, in the dragons' eyes, for insignificant humans to know about). For example, perhaps the power that the dragons receive when they are elevated to ruler status comes not from the Great One but from the magic and wealth that the dragon itself has accumulated over the years (hence the dragons' desire for treasure). If the dragons sprang from the original matter of the Multiverse, they might gain power from earthly materials such as gold and gems. Such information,

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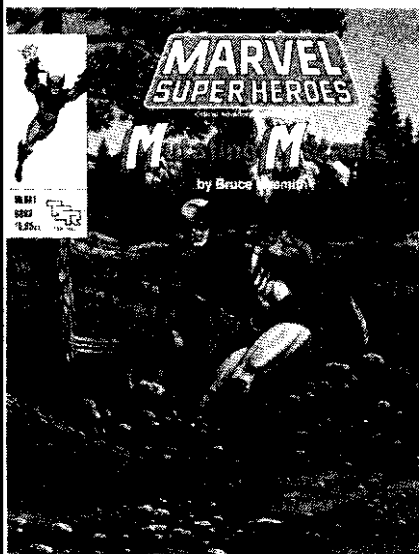
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leaked out to a party of loud and boisterous humans, could be disastrous, to the mysterious and awe-inspiring image that dragons project. Everyone knows that dragons keep treasure, but to think that such treasure could make one a god is another matter entirely. It would spell the end to any kind of privacy dragons might enjoy, as anyone who could pick up a sword races off to slay the mighty beasts and get a share of the dragons' hard-earned wealth, ignorantly hoping for godhood.

Draedens, too, may appear in campaigns involving dragons. Draedens, the ancient kin of the dragons, appeared at the same time as dragons (and probably from the same source). Their constant ties with the dragons have bewildered sages for centuries. If indeed these stories of the origins of the dragon rulers are true, where do the draedens fit in? Are they, as some wise men suspect, the descendants of the beings that created the entire Multiverse? Perhaps the dracolologists of Glantri are closer to the truth with their theory that the draedens, having been created along with dragons and having changed very little if at all since then, are the eyes and ears of their creators, observing the progress and development of the dragons. If this is true, it would seem to indicate that the focus of the creators' "great experiment" concerns not only humans and demihumans, but dragons as well!

Characters may work for or against dragons in any campaign, but working *for* dragons may prove to be the most profitable and longest-lived system. Dragons, as the infamous hoarders of treasure, could offer rewards greater than any king—and would offer it without fighting the party, too! Of course, the characters must undertake dangerous missions of the dragon's choosing to gain such riches. Mission hooks involving dragons are present in many of the Gazetteers, such as GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri* (see the notes on Prince Jagger on page 24, the school of dracolology on page 71, and the adventure "Apocalypse Then" on pages 88-89).

Dragon rulers should not be statistics. They should be vibrant parts of a challenging D&D game campaign for characters of every level.

Dragon Spirit

Armor Class: *-2 or as original form*

Hit Dice: *10* **

Move: *100' (40')*

Flying: *260' (100')*

Attacks: *2 claws and 1 bite*

Damage: *See text*

No. Appearing: *1-4*

Save As: *Fighter 10*

Morale: *12*

Treasure Type: *Nil*

Alignment: *As per plane of residence*

XP Value: *2,500*

Dragon spirits are the souls of dead dragons that have gone to the Draconian Cluster after their demise. They are the most common inhabitants of the planes of the dragons and serve their rulers faithfully. Once every 10,000 years, they are reincarnated into dragon form on one of the Inner or Outer Planes. Usually, this reincarnation will be into the same form they once used (a white dragon will remain a white dragon). However, if a lesser dragon was especially prominent in its past life, it may be elevated to a mightier form of the same alignment (blue to jade, gold to ruby, etc.).

Like most Outer Planar creatures, dragon spirits can be killed permanently only if they are killed on their appropriate home plane. If they are killed outside the Draconian Cluster, they reform on their respective planes in one to four weeks. These spirits are fanatically loyal to their rulers and never surrender in the service of those rulers.

Dragon spirits are not truly undead and so cannot be turned by clerics. However, like undead, they are immune to sleep, *charm*, and other mind-affecting spells.

These beings have transparent, incorporeal forms that can be harmed by only magical weapons or spells. However, once every 20 hours while on the Outer Planes, a dragon spirit can assume its original mortal form for one turn (see the *DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 39). At other times, a dragon spirit may attack using its claws and bite, draining 1-4 strength points for each hit. When a character's strength reaches zero, he dies without any transformation to undead status. In their ghostly forms, dragon spirits all have the same breath weapon ability: an 80' X 40' cone of a hazy material that has the effect of a *fear* spell on all those in range. Dragon spirits cannot be subdued, as they consider their duty to their ruler more important than personal honor.

After death, dragon spirits retain their intelligence, but their memories of previous lives tend to be hazy . . . hazy, that is, until those memories are jarred back to life by the arrival of beings known in their past, such as the group of adventurers that killed them! A dragon spirit may be quite surprised to see its former enemies, but it holds no grudges for past misdeeds. Indeed, a dragon that was friendly with the characters may offer them extra information or aid. Dragon spirits are able to speak in any tongue, a power granted them by their rulers as necessary. Because of their loss of memory after death, spells they knew in life are not available to them, so dragon spirits cannot cast spells unless specifically enabled by their ruler. The Great One often gives his personal bodyguards major, spell-casting powers, but the other rulers do not do so unless absolutely necessary, for doing so drains their magical energies. Ω

The Voyage

Continued from page 44

centuries of fruitless wars, a great shaman rose from the ogrish ranks. Utaba the Shaman claimed Immortals had spoken to him and had given him the *Altar of the Stars*—a powerful relic that was to be the salvation of the holy land. According to the Immortals' directives, he made the prophecy that Nunjarese and Hatwa must one day all become blood kindred on the *Altar of the Stars*. Though his philosophy was quite unpopular, Utaba went on preaching for peace. A shower of Hatwa arrows and Nunjarese boulders eventually ended Utaba's bright but ever-so-brief vocation.

Soon thereafter, pestilence and, death swept the hallowed land. Losses became so horrendous that it was painfully obvious both races were doomed. Finally, an elven hero reminded his people of the shaman's fateful prediction, and in total desperation all attempted to follow Utaba's precepts. Each elf and each ogre made a cut on his or her hand, mixing their blood together on the holy altar. So was the blood alliance of Nunjar and Hatwa forever sealed. Racial intermarriage was enforced, and generations later, Nunjarese and Hatwa were no more. Their children, the N'djatwa, flourished and eventually reached the Green Bay. The *Altar of the Stars* remained at the site at which the races merged, sheltered by an impressive temple at the center of the N'djatwa capital of M'banyika.

The N'djatwa race is similar to others used in the D&D game. To be a N'djatwa, one needs a Strength and Intelligence of 12 minimum. Hit points are rolled on eight-sided hit dice, according to the N'djatwa Experience Advancement table,

N'djatwa save as elves of the same level (young and teens save as El). They have infravision and the ability to detect secret passages. They are not, however, immune to ghoul paralysis, nor can they climb trees. N'djatwa are Neutral or Chaotic, and they can cast magic-user spells. Neutral individuals with a Wisdom of 13 or more can cast druidic spells in lieu of magic-user spells (no clerical spells beyond the first level are allowed for these druids); this decision is irreversible and must be taken when the character is created. Typical adult statistics are as follows: AC 5; HD 3*; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 fist or weapon; Dmg 1d6 per fist or by weapon; #AP 1d12 (any); Save E3: ML 10; AL N or C; XP 115.



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A Spell of CONVERSATION

by Ed Friedlander



Artwork by Jim Holloway



Would you rather fight a dragon or chat with it? Good choice!

A dragon should be as powerful and fascinating as a high-level character, and more intriguing than any other monster of the Prime Material plane. Each dragon has its own particular interests, and the presence of a dragon has a dramatic impact for good or ill on a region's defense, economy, and politics. In a well-run AD&D® campaign, no dragon is just a fighting machine, but all dragons should be dangerous.

When a dragon appears, many adventurers see their only choices as being between fighting it or running from it. But in distant Kara-Tur, a shukenja named Li Po worked to develop a new alternative. A pacifist who emphasized the value of communication as a means of preventing or resolving conflict, Li Po carefully introduced a holy spell to allow dragons and humankind to understand one another under all circumstances—even if the dragons being conversed with do not normally speak. Furthermore, the spell would be negated if it were used as a means to strike at the dragon with which one is talking. When used properly, this spell should introduce a new light on role-playing.

Speak With Dragonkind (Alteration)

Level: 6 (priest) Comp.: V,S
Range: 0 CT: 7
Duration: 1 turn/lvl. ST: None

Area of effect: All within 30' of the caster
Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, the shukenja (or sohei or cleric) is given a special aura that can be detected and read by only a dragon or dragonlike creature such as a chimera, pseudo-dragon, firedrake, dragonne, Oriental dragon, etc. The aura allows the dragon to determine that the caster is not hostile and is interested only in conversation. Any number of dragons may view the caster, and the chance that any sufficiently motivated dragon will feel impelled to attack the caster while the spell is in effect is only 2% per hit die of the dragon. Even if this check is passed, the dragon will have no wish to attack the spell-caster if no real reason for such an attack exists.

In all other cases, the dragon may decide to speak for one of two reasons. First, the dragon might genuinely desire conversation. Second, any dragon who slays a spell-caster while this spell is in effect will become known to the deity of the spell-caster; that deity will always make a point afterward of arranging for vengeance to

be dispensed by various adventurers, though the success of these attempts must be played out or determined randomly by the DM. The knowledge of this vengeance is made known to the dragon upon sighting the spell-caster while this spell is in effect, and few dragons are willing to risk a god's displeasure. The worst that a dragon will do to the spell-caster in most cases is merely ignore him or make vaguely threatening gestures.

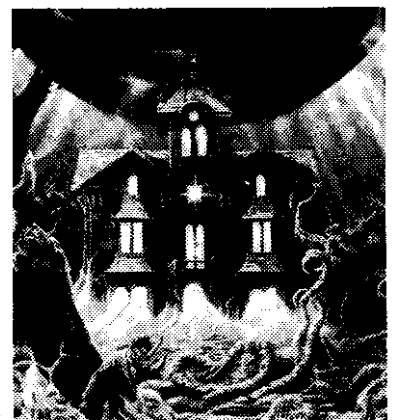
The shukenja, too, is bound by certain considerations. This spell will not be granted to a someone who secretly plans to harm any dragon being addressed by this spell. If the spell-caster or one of his companions within the area of effect shows hostile intent toward a dragon while this spell is in effect, the spell is cancelled immediately and the dragon to whom the characters are speaking will (if it chooses to attack) gain a +2 bonus on all to-hit and damage rolls in combat with those characters. The dragon will gain initiative on its first attack even if the characters make the first moves, as the spell invokes a curse that gives the dragon the upper hand for the first round of melee. The phrase "hostile intent" includes any action that would harm or immobilize the dragon, as well as any attempt to spy on the dragon's lair prior to an attack or theft. Wise spell-casters will avoid entering a dragon's lair, as the temptation of seeing the dragon's treasure hoard might move the caster to contemplate a "hostile" action—and thus invite doom.

Since this spell is actually cast upon characters, no saving throw or magic-resistance check is necessary for dragons viewing them. The dragon operates under its own free will and may decide to attack the characters once the spell's duration expires. Dragons that speak with characters using this spell are not obliged to be truthful or helpful, nor are they compelled to reveal their secrets. However, even evil dragons are more inclined to bend or shade the truth rather than to lie, as this may prove to be far more effective a tactic in certain situations (e.g., if asked for information on a nearby orc tribe, a red dragon might disguise the fact that the orcs give him treasure and sacrifices, and might offer misleading information as to its location and the composition of its forces). Divination spells can be used in conjunction with this spell to strengthen one's bargaining position.

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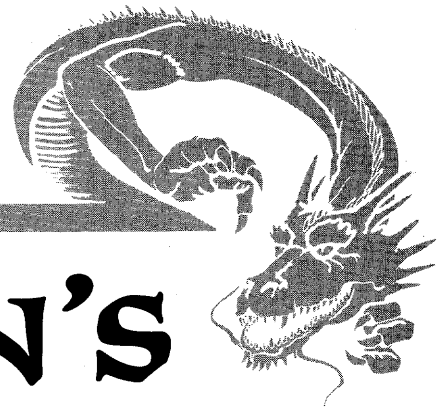
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Artwork by Terry Dykstra

The Dragon's Bestiary

Two almost-but-not-quite dragons



Gorynych

by Spike Y. Jones

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperature mountains, any subterranean area*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivorous*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average*

TREASURE: *H*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

NO. APPEARING: *1*

ARMOR CLASS: *4*

MOVEMENT: *9, 18 fly (E)*

HIT DICE: *9*

THACO: *11*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *5*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-8/1-8/1-12/1-12/1-12*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Tail capture, "wishboning"*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Difficult to surprise*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*

SIZE: *G (50' including tails)*

XP VALUE: *6,000*

While it has all the hallmarks of dragon-kind, the gorynych is unlikely to ever be mistaken for a true dragon if seen in good light; it is more likely to be seen as a dragon gone to extremes of evolution and diversification. The gorynych has a long and supple body covered with tiny blue-green scales, and giant dragonlike wings with scales so fine they almost make a feathered pattern on the leathery surfaces. Two other features differentiate them from true dragons: They have three wolfish heads, each on its own serpentine neck, and a multitude of tails, starting as three thick ones at the base of the spine but eventually dividing out to as many as 12 whip-thin tails.

Combat: Although gorynyches have no breath weapon, they are fearsome fighters nonetheless. Whether in flight or on the ground, their attack methods are the same. Each first whips its flexible tails

about in an attempt to entangle its opponents, each tail striking as a separate attack. Then it uses normal clawing and biting attacks on the entrapped foes. The tail strikes do no damage in themselves, but for every tail that holds a man-size victim (smaller creatures are usually ignored, as they would be so engulfed by even a single tail that the gorynych could not bite them without fear of biting itself), the gorynych gets a cumulative +1 to hit on all attacks made against that victim. Thus, if it wraps two tails around a fighter in the first round of combat, the gorynych can claw and bite at +2 to hit that round, and—if the fighter does not manage to eliminate or escape the two tails holding him—it can wrap more tails around him at +2 to hit in the next round. Each tail takes 2-12 hp damage before being severed, with none of these hit points being counted in the monster's hit-point total; even if rendered tail-less, there is a good chance that a gorynych will continue to fight if victory appears close. When first caught in one of these tail coils, the victim has a 10% chance of being held in such an awkward position that he won't be able to attack the gorynych (and this increases to 25% on the rare occasions when a smaller-than-man-size creature is attacked).

Another attack form unique to the gorynych is called "wishboning" by those who witness it from a distance. If the beast scores hits on a single opponent with at least two of its heads in a round, it will try to rip the victim in half between them, scoring an automatic 2-12 hp damage on that round. It does not do this automatically in every round after this first, as it must release its bites each round to get a new grip (and make a new series of attack rolls), but this doesn't present much difficulty if the victim is still held by its tails.

Unlike some monsters with multiple heads, the gorynych cannot be defeated by setting up arguments between the different brains of its body. It has only one

personality divided between its three brains, and each of these brains is fully capable of handling the operations of the entire body on its own. Thus, cutting off two of the heads will not disable its thinking or the control of its movements in any way. Because of this single mind in multiple heads, it cannot 'take turns resting heads, leaving one alert at all times; when it sleeps, all heads sleep. But with six dragon-sharp ears to hear with, the gorynych is difficult to surprise, even when asleep, and gets +2 on all surprise rolls. In addition, while it has more than one head, it cannot be attacked from behind, as it peers in all directions, even when the only apparent threats are to the front.

Habitat/Society: The gorynych is a mountain-dwelling creature, preferring windy and desolate regions to the more thickly populated tracts of true dragons. They live in deep caverns within the rocks; the long, winding tunnels to their lairs are full of evidence of their presence—scales scrapped off on the rocks, claw marks on all surfaces, the occasional coin or gem dropped from their mouths when stocking their hoards, and the rare bone that misses the periodic cleaning of the refuse in their homes. While they avoid areas where human incursions are frequent, they are intelligent enough to take note of any roadways, caravan paths and isolated settlements within a few hours flight of their caves so that they have little trouble finding food and treasure. They reproduce by laying eggs, but the young are forced out into the world as quickly as possible after hatching. The young grow rapidly, attaining full growth in nine years and living for about 400 years total.

The gorynych is not well versed in speech and has no language of its own. If there is a race that is dominant in the regions around its lair, it will have a slight understanding of this race's tongue, no matter what it is, but that is the extent of

the beast's linguistic knowledge. If its lair is in an empty tract of land, it will have no language at all, as there would be no creatures to converse with and it doesn't talk to itself.

Ecology: Gorynyches are usually the most powerful carnivores in their local food chain. They rarely interact with any other species, intelligent or not. However, they are often attacked by other highly competitive and magically powerful monsters such as dragons and beholders.

Common dragonet

by Steve Fetsch

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate wilderness*

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Group*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivorous*

INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*

TREASURE: *C*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

NO. APPEARING: *2-20*

ARMOR CLASS: *4*

MOVEMENT: *22, 24 fly (C)*

HIT DICE: *3 +3*

THACO: *17*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *3*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-4/1-4/1-6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Limited breath weapon*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to acid*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*

SIZE: *M (6' long)*

MORALE: *Average (9)*

XP VALUE: *420*

Those who reject the notion that Tiamat originally spawned evil dragonkind usually regard the common dragonet as the ancestral species of all dragons—good, evil, Oriental, and so on. The common dragonet once roamed the skies in vast flocks (they were truly common then), but hunters and more aggressive creatures have made them scarce. The female of the species is dull green in color, whereas the male is reddish brown, frequently with orange patches. Common dragonets have the same body form as regular dragons: a long neck and tail, two wings, four legs, and a serpentine body.

Combat: Common dragonets are fairly aggressive but rarely attack creatures larger than man size. However, they fight fiercely if they or their nests are threatened. Their preferred mode of attack is to spit a corrosive and flammable saliva—an evolutionary prelude to the better-known breath weapons. They may spit in combat for two rounds in a row, then once every four rounds thereafter for a total of 5-8 attacks each per day. Only one victim at a time may be so attacked.

To determine the effectiveness of a com-

mon dragonet's spitting attack, make a to-hit roll for it as for a normal attack (out to a 30' range). Note whether or not the attack roll would have hit the victim if the victim had not been using a shield by checking against the shield-using and shieldless armor-class values of the victim. If the shield deflected the attack, the shield must then make a saving throw vs. acid or else be destroyed (magical bonuses apply). If no shield deflects an attack that hits a victim, the victim's armor and equipment must save vs. acid or be destroyed (magical bonuses apply); the victim himself takes 2-20 hp damage. The victim must make a saving throw vs. dragon breath to avoid permanent blindness from the attack. The saliva is also flammable, and any character who is carrying a flame source and is struck by the saliva has a 50% chance of having the flame ignite the saliva, which explodes for 1-8 hp damage to all within a 5' radius of the flame.

The saliva may be neutralized by using either a scroll of *protection from acid* or *protection from dragon breath*. Use of a great helm offers a +4 on saving throws to prevent blindness. Equipment carried in a container must save vs. acid only if the container itself fails its saving throw (at which point it falls apart).

Habitat/Society: Common dragonets seem to be at ease in many sorts of temperate environments, including hills, swamps, forests, and plains. They live to be 200 years at most, reproducing by laying eggs. Egg laying occurs once every decade for female dragonets, with 2-5 eggs being laid. Few of these eggs hatch, however (see "Ecology"). A group of dragonets will fiercely defend their lairs and will aid other dragonets, but they are not capable of elaborate planning.

Ecology: The hide of the common dragonet can be made into corrosion-resistant leather armor. This leather is difficult to work, so the leatherworker must make a proficiency check with a -3 modifier. The hides of two common dragonets must be used to make enough armor for a adult human (the hide from one is enough for a being of 4' height or less). This armor gives the wearer a +4 saving throw vs. all acidic attacks, and it can be dyed in any color or pattern.

It is possible but difficult to gather the common dragonet's saliva. The amount of saliva from one spitting attack is enough to fill four half-pint vials. A direct hit from one of these vials does 1-6 hp acidic damage; the application of flame will cause an explosion for 1-4 hp damage to all within a 3' radius.

Common dragonets are no longer common, as their eggs are preyed upon so heavily by assorted creatures of the wild. The parents are easily distracted from their nests to chase off intruders, leaving the nests open to birds, rodents, and other assorted beasts.

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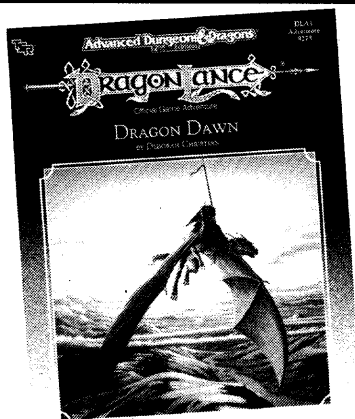
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That's Not in the Monstrous Compendium!

More neutral dragons for your AD&D® campaign

by Aaron McGruder

Arthur Collins has the credit for the original concept of neutral dragons, which first appeared in issue #37 of DRAGON® Magazine. His article opened our eyes to a whole new family of dragons and its world. Since there are more gems left for dragon names and since AD&D® game players love dragons of every sort, this article presents three new neutral dragons to supplement the original article (which can also be found in "That's not in the Monster Manual!" in the Best of DRAGON Magazine anthology vol. III).

Neutral dragons are basically reclusive creatures, preferring remote lairs, and are not very hospitable to unexpected visitors. Like all dragons, they have a passion for treasure, especially the precious and semi-precious stones for which they are named. They are generally smaller and slower than other dragons but compensate for this with their superior spell-casting capabilities and overwhelming personalities.

A neutral dragon's charisma can have a powerful effect on those who can hear his voice. Using riddling talk and his personal charm, the neutral dragon can actually entrance those not engaged in combat or similar actions. Anyone who listens to such a dragon's voice has a 10% cumula-

tive chance per round of being entranced to the point where he is under the effect of a *suggestion* spell. The victim is allowed a saving throw vs. spells, success indicating that the trance has been broken for at least six rounds, after which the dragon can try again, this time with only a 5% cumulative chance per round of success. If the dragon fails the second attempt, he cannot try again on the same victim. The dragon can affect as many people as he wishes at one time within a 90' range.

Because of its small size, the *fear* aura of a neutral dragon is saved against at +4 for all opponents. Neutral dragons cannot *polymorph* themselves unless they have that spell. They do, however, have the innate ability to *blink* six times per day, as the spell, plus the ability to communicate telepathically with any other telepathic creature or being with an 18 + intelligence. Spell-casting neutral dragons can use both wizard and priest spells.

If psionics are used in the campaign, each neutral dragon has a 50% chance of being psionic. Using the AD&D 1st Edition *Players Handbook* system, the following scores should be used for the dragons in this article: pearl dragons have a psionic ability of 110 with attack/defense modes

A,D/F,H; jade dragons have a psionic ability of 190 with attack/defense modes A,C/F,I; and jacinth dragons have a psionic ability of 225 with attack/defense modes A,C,D/F,I. Pearl dragons have three minor disciplines; jade dragons have two minors and one major; and jacinth dragons have three minors and two majors.

Because their powers vary according to age level, experience-point values for each type of dragon also vary according to age level. Relevant factors for determining the experience-point values (according to the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*) include: armor class 0 or lower (+ 1 hit-die modifier); breath weapon (+ 2); flight (+ 1); four or more attacks per round (+ 1); high intelligence (+ 1); low-level spell use (+ 1); high-level spell use (+ 2); magic resistance (+ 2); multiple attacks causing 30 + hp damage (+ 2); single attack causing 20 + hp damage (+ 2); special magical attack forms, including the *fear* aura and psionics, if used (+ 2 each); and special magical defense forms, including immunity to normal missiles and saving-throw adjustments equating hit dice to fighters' levels (+ 1 each).



Artwork by Thomas Baxa



Pearl dragons

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Rocky coastlines, cliffs

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary or clan*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional (16)*

TREASURE: *See Table 1*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3

ARMOR CLASS: 2 (*base*)

MOVEMENT: 9, Fl 18 (C), Sw 12

HIT DICE: 6 (*base*)

THACO: 15 (*base*)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 + *special*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/3-18

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Special*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Special*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Variable*

SIZE: H (14' *base*)

MORALE: *Fanatic (16 base)*

XP VALUE: *Variable*

Pearl dragons tend to reside either on steep, rocky coastlines or along sandy beaches, as long as they are near the water. They have a deep love of the salt air and the open expanse of the sea. As a result of their location, their diet consists mainly of sharks and fish, with an occasional hundred lobsters or a small whale as a treat.

Because pearls are the most abundant form of treasure in the sea, it is not surprising that pearl dragons, when not searching for food, spend most of the day pearl hunting. Over the centuries, this species has developed powerful lungs exclusively for this purpose, and a pearl dragon can stay under water for up to an hour without surfacing for air. For this reason, a pearl dragon hoard can contain up to 5,000 gp in pearls for every age level the dragon has (these pearls are in addition to his normal treasure type). Pearl dragons are somewhat nomadic, leaving one place for another once the food or pearl supply has run low. The moving process is very slow, because the dragon will refuse to leave a single object behind in his previous lair, making many journeys back and forth.

Like all neutral dragons, pearl dragons remain at a safe distance from human civilization. They rarely attack sailing vessels, though they have been known to attack bothersome pirate ships and take whatever treasure they can find from them.

Pearl dragons can breathe a cloud of scalding steam once every three rounds, measuring 90' long by 30' wide by 20' high. Pearl dragons are attacked by dragon turtles whenever possible. The hide of a pearl dragon is extremely beautiful and can be sold for as much as 60,000 gp.



Jade dragons

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Sylvan forests in Kara-Tur*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary or clan*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Omnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius (17)*

TREASURE: *See Table 2*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3

ARMOR CLASS: 0 (*base*)

MOVEMENT: 9, Fl 24 (B)

HIT DICE: 7 (*base*)

THACO: 13 (*base*)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 + *special*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/5-20

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Special*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Special*



MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Variable*
 SIZE: *H (18' base)*
 MORALE: *Fanatic (16 base)*
 XP VALUE: *Variable*

The jade dragon is the Oriental cousin to the emerald dragon of the western world. This dragon is usually considered mythical by humans and is sought after by only a few adventurous thrill seekers. Slightly more powerful than its western cousin this creature looks the same as other

Oriental dragons except that it does have wings with which to fly. Jade dragons make their lairs in the dense, remote forests of Kara-Tur and are avid collectors of rare woods. They live entirely on forest vegetation and animal life, and will not eat humans.

A jade dragon is able to breathe a powerful *sonic wail*. All those within a 90' radius take damage and must save vs. breath weapons or be deafened for 10-60 rounds. Even if the save is successful, the

victim is deafened for 2-12 rounds. In addition, all victims must make a system-shock check in order to avoid being knocked unconscious for 5-20 rounds.

The hide of a jade dragon is made up of several different shades of green, swirled about in a random pattern. No jade dragon hide has ever been sold, so its value is unknown. The few jade dragons that have been seen were reported to be exquisitely beautiful, and there are many who would pay great sums to acquire such a hide.



Jacinth dragons

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Deserts*
 FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
 ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*
 ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
 DIET: *Special*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Genius (18)*
 TREASURE: *See Table 3*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 NO. APPEARING: *1*
 ARMOR CLASS: *1 (base)*
 MOVEMENT: *9, FL 27 (B)*

HIT DICE: *9 (base)*
 THAC0: *13 (base)*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *3 + special*
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *2-7/2-7/4-24*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Special*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Special*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Variable*
 SIZE: *H (16' base)*
 MORALE: *Fanatic (16 base)*
 XP VALUE: *Variable*

Jacinth dragons are the rarest of any nonunique dragon species. On the average, only a dozen jacinth dragons at most exist on any given world. Jacinth dragons make their homes in the centers of large deserts, enjoying the hot, dry climate. Over the years, this species has developed the ability to go for weeks without water or food. They shun all other forms of life and enjoy their solitude, though they can at times be overly curious of visitors. They do venture out now and then to obtain what little treasure they do have, and it is by these excursions that their existence is known to humans.

A jacinth dragon can breathe a cone of *scalding air* raising the temperature in the area of affect (a 50' long cone with a 20' base) to the point where easily combustible materials (paper, oil, and cloth) must save vs. normal fire or burst into flame. A successful save vs. breath weapons indicates, as with all such dragons, that only half damage is taken.

The hide of a jacinth dragon sparkles and shifts in the light, with its many shades of flame-bright orange in seemingly constant motion. The jacinth dragon has the innate ability to interplay these shades so as to have a hypnotic effect on the viewer. Thus, after three rounds of a peaceful encounter, the dragon can attack with a + 3 bonus to surprise if necessary. In addition, the hide reflects sunlight so brightly that any creature who gazes upon the dragon on a particularly sunny day for more than two rounds will be blinded for 5-30 rounds if the victim fails a save vs. spells. No jacinth dragon hides have ever been taken or sold.



Table 1
Pearl Dragon Statistics

Age	Body lgt.(ft.)	Tail lgt.(ft.)	AC	Breath weapon	Spells (wizard/priest)	MR	Treasure type
1	1-4	1-3	5	1d4+1	nil	nil	nil
2	4-8	3-6	4	2d4+2	nil	nil	nil
3	8-12	6-9	3	3d4+3	nil	nil	nil
4	12-16	9-12	2	4d4+4	2/1	5%	E
5	16-20	12-15	1	5d4+5	2 2/2 1	10%	H
6	20-24	15-18	0	6d4+6	2 2 2/2 2	15%	H, U*
7	24-28	18-21	- 1	7d4+7	2 2 2 2/2 2 1	20%	H, U x 2*
8	28-32	21-24	- 2	8d4+8	2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2	25%	H, U x 2*
9	32-36	24-28	- 3	9d4+9	2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 1	30%	H, U x 2*
10	36-40	28-31	- 4	10d4+10	2 2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 2	35%	H, U x 3*
11	40-44	31-34	- 5	11d4+11	3 3 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 2 1	40%	H, U x 4*
12	44-48	34-38	- 6	12d4+12	3 3 3 3 2 2 2/2 2 2 2 2	45%	H, U x 4*

* All gems in treasure type U are actually pearls.

Table 2
Jade Dragon Statistics

Age	Body lgt.(ft.)	Tail lgt.(ft.)	AC	Breath weapon	Spells (wizard/priest)	MR	Treasure type
1	2-5	1-4	3	1d6+1	nil	nil	nil
2	5-10	4-8	2	2d6+2	nil	nil	nil
3	10-15	8-12	1	3d6+3	2/1	nil	D
4	15-20	12-16	0	4d6+4	2 2/2	5%	E
5	20-25	16-20	- 1	5d6+5	2 2 2/2 1	10%	H
6	25-30	20-24	- 2	6d6+6	2 2 2 2/2 2	15%	H, I
7	30-35	24-28	- 3	7d6+7	2 2 2 2 2/2 2 1	20%	H, I
8	35-40	28-32	- 4	8d6+8	2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2	25%	H, I x 2
9	40-45	32-36	- 4	9d6+9	2 2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 1	30%	H, I x 2
10	45-50	36-40	- 5	10d6+10	3 3 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 2	35%	H, I x 2, R
11	50-55	40-44	- 6	11d6+11	3 3 3 3 2 2 2/2 2 2 2 1	45%	H, I x 2, R
12	55-60	44-48	- 7	12d6+12	3 3 3 3 3 3 2/2 2 2 2 2	55%	H, I x 2, R, U

Table 3
Jacinth Dragon Statistics

Age	Body lgt.(ft.)	Tail lgt.(ft.)	AC	Breath weapon	Spells (wizard/priest)	MR	Treasure type
1	1-4	1-4	4	2d4	nil	nil	nil
2	4-8	4-7	3	3d4	2/1	nil	nil
3	8-14	7-10	2	4d4	2 2/2	nil	nil
4	14-18	10-13	1	5d4	2 2 2/2 1	nil	E, T
5	18-20	13-16	0	6d4	2 2 2 2/2 2	15%	H, R, T
6	20-22	16-19	- 1	7d4	2 2 2 2 2/2 2 1	20%	H, R, T x 2
7	22-26	19-22	- 2	8d4	2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2	25%	H, R, T x 2
8	26-28	22-25	- 3	9d4	2 2 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 1	30%	H, I, R, T x 3
9	28-30	25-28	- 4	10d4	3 3 2 2 2 2 2/2 2 2 2	35%	H, I, R, T x 4
10	30-32	28-31	- 5	11d4	3 3 3 3 2 2 2/2 2 2 2 1	40%	H, I x 2, R, T x 4
11	32-34	31-34	- 6	12d4	3 3 3 3 3 3 2/2 2 2 2 2	45%	H, I x 2, R, T X 4
12	34-36	34-37	- 7	13d4	4 4 3 3 3 3 2/3 3 3 2 2	50%	H, I X 3, R, T X 5



Forum

Continued from page 6

art, but without the details and rules available from Fox-Davies; von Volborth, in fact, emphasized "art" over "heraldry."

In a way, I was surprised at not finding Fox-Davies listed in the original article. I was under the impression that his *Complete Guide* was practically the textbook for heraldry.

Table 2 of the article requires some clarification. While the metals *argent* and *or* do translate to silver and gold, they are commonly rendered as white and yellow! The furs are better described in the text, the table being highly misleading. Ermine, to be properly described, consists of black ermine tails on a white field (the shape of the tail spots varies with period and artistic taste; also, the field is white, not silver). Vair consists of alternating patches of blue and white. To the tinctures I would add *proper*, which is the term used to indicate natural coloration—and about the only way to get the color brown into a device (a bear proper . . .).

Mr. Kane's article leaves the impression that only nobles were authorized to use arms. It should be pointed out that heraldic devices (as opposed to grants-of-arms) were used in other areas. Inn and guildhall signs were quite often heraldic devices; when few can read, pictures are often useful identification marks. A shovel and pickax crossed in saltire could easily represent the local mining guild, while a loaf of bread would identify a baker. (I do wonder, though, how the blazon for the Vulgar Unicorn [of the Sanctuary fantasy series] would read.) A further source of heraldic devices would be the church. Clerics might be granted arms by the upper hierarchy of their church.

This last possibility brings up the subject of heraldic jurisdictions. For purposes of example, let us visualize a medium-size island kingdom, a kingdom located on a continent with coastal access to the island, and a religious hierarchy common to both. It is possible, though perhaps unlikely, that the same device could be granted to a noble of the island (by that kingdom's college of arms), a knight of the continental kingdom (again, by a local college of arms), and to a high priest of the church (by the church's college of arms). All three bear legally granted arms! Yet a conflict could ensue should all three meet on a battlefield or at a tournament.

More likely, the church would examine the books of the two kingdoms in an attempt to avoid a conflict before granting a device. Better, the church may actually attempt to register the device with the colleges of both kingdoms, avoiding the possibility of a conflict should the priest be reassigned.

Dennis Lee Bieber
Sunnyvale CA

When I wrote "The Goals of the Gods" (issue #153) I hadn't yet been exposed to the AD&D game and its alignment system. Since then, I've learned that the AD&D system is intelligent and attractive, and it offers a good basis for role-playing.

Unfortunately, the system isn't always played as well as it was designed. This is why an article such as Tom Little's "Your Place in the Grand Scheme" (issue #153) is so valuable. With the play of alignments in a campaign too often misunderstood, extended guidelines such as Tom's are vital.

This is why I'd like to plead for more extended guidelines on alignment—an article or column's worth. No, I'm not offering myself as the author

of the piece. This will require someone who has more experience in AD&D games than I do. But I will tell you what I'd like to see: Specific examples of what the alignments mean in a practical sense. Specific, because ethics (which is what we mean when we say "alignment") are no use to role-players on a theoretical level. We need to know exactly what's expected of a given alignment in a *typical* situation. Not long ago, in a back issue of DRAGON Magazine [issue #51], I read Roger Moore's account of an adventure in which a paladin first saved a dryad, then punched her in the nose when she tried to ensnare one of his companions. The DM penalized him for such a seemingly chaotic act, then later decided that he shouldn't have, and gave a very well-reasoned account of why. This is the sort of thing I'm talking about: specific instances in anecdotal form of how different alignments should and should not act, and the reasons behind the judgments.

After all, a lot of us, particularly those who are just coming into gaming, tend to be confused about how alignment affects play—for good reason, I think. Let's face it, in most circumstances an RPG campaign requires a modern person (with all the baggage of modern ethics and morality, such as it may or may not be understood) to pretend to be a premodern person (with a different load of ethics and morality). The two can easily conflict.

For example, in the modern world we abhor the institution of slavery—and rightly so. In the best of circumstances, it's an evil thing. Under the worst of circumstances, it's evil squared and cubed. But in this you hear a modern person talking, a person brought up on a tradition of personal freedom and ethical responsibility. I can look back on ancient and medieval history and say that some people, free men and citizens, were "ahead of their time" when they preached that every man should be free. But even in that statement, it's a modern man talking. For *in the context of time*, most men believed in slavery, believed it was a necessary institution, believed that it was sanctioned by the gods, and indeed, in some cases, believed that the gods had created certain people to be slaves! Often, the men who believed these things were considered not only to be lawful, but good—while a slave who rebelled against the system was considered to be both chaotic and evil. (To mix metaphors, we make a hero of Spartacus, but any medieval paladin who refused to destroy him would have been roundly condemned.)

A peripheral issue? Perhaps, since slavery 'isn't prominent in most RPGs. But it serves to illustrate the point. (And didn't the *Monster Manual* I explain how to subdue and enslave dragons—beings often having greater intelligence and wisdom than humans? But, of course, the evil dragons deserve to be enslaved. . . .)

More specifically, what about the Crusades? While I consider them interesting from a military standpoint, and great fun to read about as a student of history, from a moral viewpoint the waste of life was tragic and the unwarranted intrusion into Middle Eastern affairs was legally indefensible. But, again, that's a modern man talking. From a medieval Christian viewpoint, the crusades were a vital element of Christianity (just as the Moslems considered the jihads to be a vital part of Islam), and the loss of life was irrelevant since it served a higher purpose. In an age of predators, might was expected to make right, and any Frankish knight who argued that he has no "right" to attack Moslems would have been branded a coward. A lawful-good paladin would not only be categorically absolved for taking part in a crusade, it would

be considered his duty to do so! The Templars and Hospitalers, sworn to religious virtues, were heroes of Christendom, whatever we may think of them in the modern world.

The Moslems held similar attitudes, and their saints actively preached religious war (as did Saint Bernard in Europe, badgering and hounding secular rulers until they took the oath to "win back the holy land"). It's only when a Saladin or a Francis of Assisi appears that we begin to see an injection of modern ethics—and Saladin fought and clawed his way to the top in the most approved feudal style. Did Richard the Lionhearted slaughter 2,500 Moslem prisoners before the walls of captured Acre, just because their ransom was overdue? Saladin massacred a regiment of black Africans in Cairo—with their women and children—to prevent them from jeopardizing his control of Egypt. Contemporaries didn't bat an eye over either action. Even today, Saladin is spoken of in the Moslem world as a gentleman. If asked, the average Westerner would probably class Richard I Plantagenet (who nearly taxed his kingdom into ruin in order to make his crusading adventure more splendid, and callously left his wicked brother Prince John in control of England while he went crusading) as something approximate to the AD&D game's "lawful good."

To cap it all, St. Louis (King Louis IX of France) took part in not one but two crusades, dying in the second. His government was just and generous; he made an excellent revision of judicial standards within his realm, considered the royal authority (bestowed upon him by God) to be beyond infringement, sent 10,000 livres to his erstwhile Moslem captors when they accepted a deficient ransom payment, and treated the Jews of France abominably (a fault any contemporary Christian would happily have forgiven). A "lawful good" man? I doubt you'll find any secular ruler in all premodern history who more deserves the title. I also doubt you'll find any modern liberal who would grant it to him.

I hope I'm not being too wordy in getting my point across: Modern ethics are different from premodern ethics; premoderns expected different things from lawfulness and goodness (and from chaos and evil) than we do. If we're going to dress up modern role-players in premodern clothes without expecting them to adopt premodern attitudes (which I personally would *strenuously* oppose), we have to give them specific examples of alignment from which to operate.

I'm rather disappointed that the "neutral" alignment is so consistently portrayed as sort of, "wishy washy." In my opinion, the neutral-good character—recognizing as he does that sometimes law is the enemy of justice and sometimes its friend—is the most admirable of all. I could hope that you'll give some attention to the idea of neutrality being "flexibility" rather than "indecisiveness."

Craig H. Barrett
Canon City CO

It seems as if this war between good and evil is never going to end. I'm sick of other people telling DMs how to run their campaigns. If a DM wants to have an all-evil, all-good, or even all-neutral campaign, then so be it! If a DM wants to have a mixed campaign, that's even better! It is a DM's choice if he wants to use evil characters. DMs shouldn't be told how to run their campaign, what to allow and what not to allow. This is what makes a campaign unique. Campaigns *should* be unique, not universal.

Sure, evil characters can be disruptive, but that's not the way it has to be. Occasional squab-

bles can even enhance game play and role-playing (provided they are not hindering the enjoyment of others). Who lets whom ride off on his high horse? Sometimes giving evil characters what they want will keep them satisfied.

However, if dissention is chronic, an alignment change is in order. There are several ways to go about this. You may plant a *helm of opposite alignment* for the offending character to find. Or you may lure the character into a situation where his actions would change his alignment (e.g., a lawful-evil PC helping other people instead of himself would make his alignment lawful-good if done often enough). A chaotic-evil PC could perhaps have some genetic "kind streaks," making the PC chaotic good. Or you may simply force the player into changing his character's alignment.

Encourage players to use any alignment they want. Players also resent being told what they can or can't have. Alignment is payable as long as it is used correctly and this use doesn't ruin play for others. There is no right or wrong alignment; no one alignment is more enjoyable than another.

In issue #151, a letter from Toby Myers appeared in "Forum." This letter stated that neutral good is totally good, more so than lawful good, because it doesn't care about law or chaos, only good. He stated the same for neutral evil. This is not so. A neutral character maintains the balance between law and chaos. If, as Mr. Myers implies, a neutral character doesn't care about one or the other, he couldn't maintain that delicate balance. A neutral character will side with a lawful force if a chaotic force is becoming too powerful, and vice versa. The only reason a neutral-good character is good is because he believes that "since the universe is vast and contains many creatures . . . a determined pursuit of good will not upset the balance" [2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, page 47]. This is not "not caring!" A neutral-evil character cares only about himself and doesn't bother with others. A chaotic-evil character will abuse lesser folk until they follow him. The same neutral-evil character would have left them in peace. Now, who's more evil?

Toby C. Jennings
King City CA

In respect to campaign creation: Like so many other things, the best way is to prey off of the genius of others, tie the mix-and-match jumble together with a few ideas of your own, and set the players on it.

In clearer terms, the first step is to examine the party thoroughly, making sure you have a complete update on all of their statistics, possessions, personalities, backgrounds, etc. You then scour what magazines and modules you have accumulated, and pick the minds of any of your DM friends. You gather up the absolute best adventure or series of adventures—with respect to the party—and begin a figurative process of modifying, cutting, and pasting. Find the module with the best introduction and fastest-paced beginning, and start with that. Take encounters from other modules in appropriate settings, and lay them in different places all around. For example, if you have a very good and interesting encounter that takes place in a forest adventure, and the module that you have picked for a starter is a forest adventure, weave it in. Look at your wandering monster list; then find adventures centered on those monsters, wherever possible (most wandering monsters are so common that this shouldn't be difficult). Decide on how simply meeting the monster wandering, or in a small setup, could lead into this other

adventure—if the PCs take the bait. Don't let your mind be closed to modules from other systems; they can usually be adapted with much less trouble than many people think, and can be a good deal of fun.

For example: A 10th-level party is entering your new AD&D 2nd Edition campaign. Start off with WG5 *Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure*, a fast-paced, quick-to-start adventure. Beyond the "unopenable" doors place the "Treasure Vault of Kasil," a DUNGEON® Adventures module [from issue 13], in place of some of your first adventure. Decide that one of the pits in the Vault is the pit that leads to EX1 *Dungeonland*. The escape from Dungeonland by the little boat at the end of the module could lead to any number of waterborne adventures, including some of your own. And the characters are still just trying to get back to their homes after departing for Castle Maure in WG5.

Or say you have a wonderful module, but it is a couple of levels too high for the PCs to survive. Send them through it anyway, so that they'll get enough out of it to enjoy it, and when they die, have them wake up 130 years later, raised by a priest who wants to find out more about the past, but who dies a minute later from an unknown cause. They then see a green light in the distance, head for it, you send them

through the skeleton lair from *The Book of Lairs* (just weird enough to be from the future), and follow it up by having them see a flying ship crash-land in "Jammin," a SPELLJAMMER™ adventure by Jim Ward in DUNGEON issue #21. Decide that SPELLJAMMER game ships are common in the future and, depending on the outcome of that adventure, send them through X2 *Castle Amber* a D&D module by Tom Moldvay, but make the sudden appearance of the castle be normal for this time, and the inhabitants—the Amber family—typical nobles of the future. If the PCs take off in the SPELLJAMMER game ship, let them find the Forgotten Realms—in the time presented in the boxed set—or Greyhawk, or Krynn, or Pluto for that matter. The fact is, you'll probably find good adventures everywhere, for almost any situation, without tapping your own resources—until you really feel a malicious streak coming on.

My own world contains renamed versions of the Lands of Lanewt, the Hill, Mechica, the Known World, R'lyeh, Thay, the Isle of the Apes, and Barovia; any of them sound familiar? When it comes to DMing, adapting and modifying are the keys.

Toby Myers
Hamilton NY

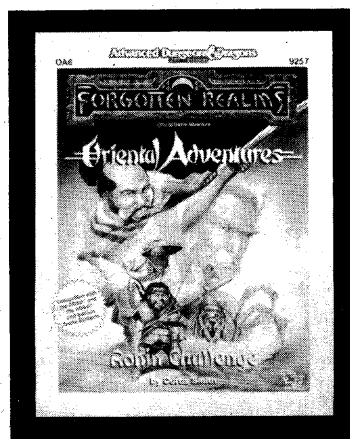
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Also Known As...

An orc is a norke, of course, of course—

by Ethan Ham

When players begin to memorize the monsters' abilities, the game loses much of its mystery. The encounters become nothing more than target practice, and the campaign takes its first steps toward becoming a Monty Haul dungeon instead of a suspenseful adventure into the unknown. The problem is: How does a DM maintain an air of mystery in a game where monster statistics and game rules are available to every player of the game?

The approach described by Ed Greenwood in the article "Keep 'em Guessing" (in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, volume V) is a good way to maintain the suspense and mystery of the campaign.

Mr. Greenwood suggests giving the players only a vague idea of their characters' abilities. The AKA (Also Known As) system described in this article is complimentary to this idea. Instead of focusing on the characters, however, the AKA system uses "mystery monster" encounters.

DMs often forbid players to discuss monster attributes while in the dungeon. This doesn't solve the basic problem, however, since the players still know the information. Another technique is to constantly use new monsters in the dungeon. While this works, creating these new monsters is a real challenge and can strain the creativity of any DM.

The AKA system gives the official monsters alternative names. This method can be used in the AD&D® game without difficulty. The AKA system is based on the fact that each different society has different names for the same monsters. We could, of course, just start calling an ogre a "refrigerator," but much of the fun in role-playing games is in confronting legends hand-to-hand. The AKA system uses the many authentic regional names by which AD&D game monsters were known throughout history. For example, the leprechaun has various names in different areas of Ireland: *lurican* in Kerry, *chluricaune* in Cork, *lurikeen* in Kildare, etc.

The AKA Thesaurus

Annis	Gentle Annie ⁹	Faeries, generic	Daoine maithe ⁴¹ , dennee shee ⁴¹ , sheehogue ⁴¹ , shingawn ⁴¹ , tylwyth teg ⁴² , wichthln ¹⁶
Aquatic ogre	Moruand ⁴¹ , murduac ⁴¹ , soetrolde ⁴¹ , skrimst ⁴⁴	Genie	Genius ²⁹ (singular form of genni), juno ³⁸ (female), lares ²⁹ , stoicheia ¹⁷
(merrow)	Furors ²⁹ , vadembar ¹⁹ , wut ¹⁶	Ghost	Bhut ¹⁸ , gangferd ⁴⁴ , hantu ²⁵ , kasa ²¹ , kuei ⁵ , maneen ⁴¹ , mora ³¹ , nair ⁴⁴ , onyudu ²¹ , siabrae ⁴¹ , taidhbhse ⁴¹ , tais ⁴¹
Berserker	Bogy ⁹ , bug ⁹ , kankas ¹⁹ , koko ¹⁹	Giant, general	Athach ⁴² , jatte ⁴⁴ , orch ²⁰ , stalo ²³
Boggle	Bodachan sabhail ⁴² , bwbachod ⁴³ , bwca ⁴³ , dobie ⁹ , domovik ³¹ , fenoderee ⁴³ , grogan ⁴² , kaukas ²⁴ , kobito ²¹ , niagruisar ⁴⁴ , nisse ⁴⁴ , para ¹³ , pukys ²⁴	Giant, hill	Fanggen ³⁷
Brownie	Bwca ⁴³ , bwciod ⁴³	Giant, stone	Foawr ⁴³ , fomorian ⁴²
Buckawn	Bogy ⁹ , bodach ⁴¹ , bugan ⁴³ , bull-beggar ⁹ , busbus ¹⁹ , mormolux ¹⁷ , mumus ¹⁹	Giant, storm	Fankenmannikin ³⁷ , fomor ⁴¹ , jotun ⁴⁴ , orculi ²³
Bugbear	Bug-a-boo ⁹	Gnome	Berg-monche ¹⁶ , coblynau ⁴³ , heinzelmannchen ¹⁶ , husse ⁴⁴ , genemos ¹⁷ , gomme ¹⁴
Subrace	Apotharni ¹⁷ , gandharva ¹⁸ , kentauroi ¹⁷ , kinnara ¹⁸ , kimpurusha ¹⁸ , phere ¹⁷	Goblin	Bakemono ²¹ , bogy ⁹ , coblyn ⁴³ (plural: coblynau), fossegrim ⁴⁴ , fuath ⁴² , ghello ¹⁷ , grim ⁴⁴ , kirkegrim ⁴⁴
Centaur	Callicantzari ¹⁷	Gorgon	Catoblepas ²⁹
Subrace	Calcatris ¹⁴ , calcatris ²⁹ , icheumon ¹⁷	Griffon	Grup ¹⁷ , gryphus ²⁹ , karga ³⁹ , kirni ²¹ , senmurv ³¹ , sumargh ³¹
Cockatrice	Ce sith ⁴² , cir sith ⁴²	Gripping	Kappi ²¹
Cooshee	Hound-of-the-hill ⁹	Groaning spirit (banshee)	Aine ⁴¹ , baobhan sith ⁴² , bean chaointe ⁴¹ , bean-nighe ⁴² , bean-tighe ⁴¹ , caoineag ⁴² , caoteach ⁴² , cwn mamau ⁴¹ , gwrach y rhibyn ⁴³
Subrace	Arimaspi ³⁴ , kuklops ¹⁷	Guardian familiar	Mikanko ²¹
Cyclopskin	Brag ⁹ , co-walker ⁹ , fetch ⁴² , fylgia ⁴⁴ , vardogr ⁴⁴ , waff ⁹	Halfing	Banakil ⁴⁵ , holbytla ⁴⁵ , kud-dukan ⁴⁵ , kuduk ⁴⁵ , periannath ⁴⁵
Doppelganger	Gwiber ⁴³ , vipera ²⁹ , wurm ¹⁶	Harpy	Arpuai ¹⁷
Dragon, general	Moko ²⁸	Hell hound	Cwn mamau ⁴³ , devil's dandy dog ⁹
Dragon, brass	Linnorm ⁴⁴	Subrace	Cwn wybr43
Dragon, green	Payshitha ⁴⁴	Hobgoblin	Bwgan ⁴³ , doobby ⁹ , lob ⁹ , puki ⁴¹
Dragon turtle	Aloustinal ¹⁷ (may also be oread), hulder ⁴⁴ , jashtesme ¹ , rusalka ³¹ (may also be nereid)	Hound of ill omen	Cwn annwfn ⁴³ , gabriel hound ⁹ , ratchet ⁹ , yellhound ⁹
Dryad	Jugenderinnerugen ⁴⁰	Succubus (female), incubus (male)	Alp ²³ (female), mara ³⁵ , mare ⁹ , mora ¹⁹ , painajainen ²³ (female)
Duergar	Abac ⁴¹ , arndt ⁴⁰ , avanc ⁴³ , corrigan ⁴² , dvergar ⁴⁴ , dverge ⁴⁴ , dvorgurin ⁴¹ , fain ⁴¹ , guerrieron ⁴² , hairdmandle ³⁷ (plural: hairmandlene), hosegueannet ⁴² , marchen ⁴⁰ , nain ⁴² , oennerbanske ¹⁵ , poulpique ⁴² , tusse ⁴⁴ , vui ²⁸ , wui ²⁸ , zwerge ¹⁶	Kobold	Alraune ¹⁶ , biersal ¹⁶ , galgenmannchen ¹⁶ , oarauncle ¹⁶
Elf	Alfar ⁴⁴ , ellyllon ⁴³ , esprit follet ⁴² , fadet ¹⁴ , follet ⁴² , hidfolk ⁴⁴ , hulder ⁴⁴ , huldrafol ⁴⁴ , huldukona ⁴⁴ (female), liosalfar ⁴⁴ , lutin ¹⁴ , ouph ⁹ , vaettir ⁴⁴ , vattar ¹²	Korred	Corriquets ¹⁴ , crion ¹⁴ , guerrieronets ¹⁴ , hommes cornus ¹⁴ , korriks ¹⁴
Elf, drow	Daimones epichthonioi ¹⁷ , dock-alfar ⁴⁴ , henkie ⁴² , trov ⁴²	Leprechaun	Clurican ⁴¹ , leith brog ⁴¹ , luchorpain ⁴¹ , luchryman ⁴¹ , lurican ⁴¹ , lurikeen ⁴¹
Elf, sylvan	Dames vertes ¹⁴		
Elfin cat	Cait sith ⁴¹		

the Orc

using the AKA system



Artwork by Jim Holloway and Daniel Horne

The AKA system campaign

When using the AKA system, you must be careful to prevent the players from thinking you are taking unfair advantage of your power as a DM. The method of introducing an alternative name is crucial and must be well thought out.

The most effective way is by means of an NPC encounter. If the characters are being hired by villagers, have the NPCs describe the monster that has been plaguing them as a "fetch" rather than a doppelganger. Then, instead of searching for the doppelganger, the party will look for a new and unusual monster that just happens to have shape-changing abilities.

The second, more difficult method is done without any NPCs. For example, when the party is confronted by orcs, say something like, "Several large humanoids with piglike faces are attacking you! You recognize them from stories you have heard. They are *norkes!*" The main drawback to the second method is that once you have established a particular alternate name for a monster, you must continue to use it. As a result, it is very likely the players will soon catch on to that alias. One solution to this problem is to have a different alternative name for the same monster for each different player. (Perhaps each of them learned the name of the

monster from a different source.) You pick the alternate name based on who is viewing the monster at the time. Once you establish an alternative name, you must stick with it.

Note that some of the alternate names for certain monsters in this AKA system are also the names of separate and sometimes unrelated monsters in the AD&D game (e.g., the gorgon is called the catoblepas in Roman folklore, and the stone giant and storm giant might be confused with the fomorian giant). Indeed, some people in fantasy countries might lump all large reptilian monsters together as "dragons: or all humanoids as "orcs."

Subrace	Far darrig ⁴¹ (also called fear deara ⁴¹ and redman ⁴¹)
Subrace	Geanncanac ⁴¹ and red caps ⁴¹ (also called bloody caps ³³ , dunters ³³ , powries ³³ , and red combs ³³)
Merman	Ben-varrey ⁴³ , ceasg ⁴² , daoine mara ⁴² , dinny-merra ⁴³ , gorgona ¹⁷ , hakenmann ⁴⁴ , havfrue ¹⁶ , havmand ⁴⁴ , maigndeán-mhara ⁴² , maigndeán-mhara ⁴² , maighdeán na tuinne ⁴² , maremind ⁴⁴ , meerfran ¹⁶ , meerweiber ¹⁶ , morgan ⁴² , murughach ⁴¹ , watermome ¹⁶ , wut-ian uder ⁴
Nereid	Naïad ¹⁷
Nighthag	Cailleach bheur ⁴² , calill eaca ⁴¹ , haetes ⁹ (the ae is a ligature), hexe ¹⁶ , krisky ³¹ , nocnitsa ³¹ , plaksy ³¹
Subrace	Makva ³ (also called a wood hag)
Nixie	Dracae ¹⁴ , fenetten ¹⁴ , fossegrim ⁸ , fuath ⁴² , hakelmanner ¹⁶ , kallraden ⁴⁴ , nacken ⁴⁴ , nakineiu ¹⁰ , nakk ¹⁰ , nakki ¹³ , nickelmanner ¹⁶ , nikkisen ⁴³ , seemannlein ¹⁶ , stromkarl ⁴⁴ , vough ⁴²
Nymph	-
Subrace	Oread ¹⁷ (also called anemikais ¹⁷ and anemogadzoudes ¹⁷)
Ogre	Drakos ¹⁷ , drakaena ¹⁷ (female), lamid ¹⁷ (female), malbrou ¹⁴ , tengu ²¹ , yamauba ²¹
Ogre magi	Oni ²¹
Orc	-
Subrace	Norke ³⁷
Pegasus	Arion ¹⁷
Penanggalan	Azeman ³⁶

Pixie	Meryon ⁹ , duine sith ⁴² , pobel vean ⁶ , tylwyth ⁴³
Phoenix	Bennu ⁸ , feng ⁵ , ho ²¹ , hwang ⁵ , o ²¹
Roc	Angka ² , bar yachre ²² , pyong ⁵
Satyr	Callitric ¹¹ , fauni ²⁰ , pane ¹⁷ , urisk ⁴² , silvani ²⁰
Troll	Elfor ⁴⁴ , ellefolk ⁴⁴ , foddenskkmaend ¹² (the ae is a ligature), fulde ¹² , huldre ⁴⁴ , maanvaki ¹³ , pysslinger ⁴⁴ , thusser ⁴⁴
Subrace	Bjerg-trolde ⁴⁴ , skovtrolde ²³ (also called skogsra ²³), ragnhildur ⁴⁴
Unicorn	Biasd na srogaig ⁴¹ , ch'i-lin ⁵ , monokeros ¹⁷
Vampire	Bampuras ¹⁷ , sukuyan ³⁸ , tumpaniaios ¹⁷ , upior ²⁷ , upir ³¹ , vrykolakas ¹⁷ (plural: vrykolakes)
Subrace	Lidevic ¹⁹
Werewolf	Borbolakas ¹⁷ , kuldottfarkas ¹⁹ , legarou ³⁸ , loup-garou ¹⁴
Subrace	Prikolics ³⁰
Wight	Haug-bui ⁴¹ , tuath de danaar ⁴¹ , vitr ⁴⁴
Will-o-the-wisp	Annequins ¹⁴ , chandelas ³² , chere dansante ¹⁴ , culards ¹⁴ , eclaireux ¹⁴ , elf fire ⁹ , ellyldan ⁴³ , fioles ¹⁴ , fuochi fatui ²⁰ , heerwische ¹⁶ , huckepoten ¹⁶ , ignis fatuus ⁴² , irrbloss ⁴⁴ , irrichter ¹⁶ , jack o' lanthorn ⁹ , joan-in-the-wad ⁹ , loumerottes ¹⁴ , luctenmaneken ¹⁶ , lygteman ⁴⁴ , lyktgubbe ⁴⁴ , merry dancers ⁴² , nimbleman ⁴² , rusalky ³¹ , spunkies ⁹ , swetylko ⁷ , tan noz ¹⁴ , Saint Elmo's fire ²⁶
Subrace	Wivre ¹⁴
Wyvern	Wish hounds ⁹
Yeth-hound	Draugr ⁴⁴ , rawga ²³
Zombie	

Endnotes

1—Albanian; 2—Arabic; 3—Bulgarian; 4—Cheremissian; 5—Chinese; 6—Cornish; 7—Czechoslovakian; 8—Egyptian; 9—English; 10—Estonian; 11—Ethiopian; 12—Faroese; 13—Finnish; 14—French; 15—Friesian; 16—German; 17—Greek; 18—Hindu; 19—Hungarian; 20—Italian; 21—Japanese; 22—Jewish; 23—Lapp; 24—Lithuanian; 25—Malayan; 26—Mediterranean; 27—Polish; 28—Polynesian; 29—Roman; 30—Rumanian; 31—Russian; 32—Sardinian; 33—Scottish, Lowland; 34—Scythian; 35—Slavic; 36—Surinam; 37—Swiss; 38—Trinidadian; 39—Turkish; 40—Vendish; 41—Celtic, Irish, and Goidelic; 42—Brittany, Brythonic, and Highland Scottish; 43—Insular Brythonic, Manx, and Welsh; 44—Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish; 45 — *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien.

How to use the AKA list

Listed alphabetically by official AD&D game names is a thesaurus of alternative monster names. Under the official name of each monster are two groups of entries. The first group is the AKA list. These names can be interchanged as equivalents of that monster's name. Below this is a second set of entries: the subraces of each monster type. These subraces are closely related to, but not the same as, the official monster; descriptions of subraces follow. All AKA names for the subraces are listed in the AKA Thesaurus.

All alternative names are endnoted to describe the cultural origin of the monster. For the names that come from true folklore, the country of origin is shown. Several names, however, are from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and these are so noted. A more complete description of the source is given in the bibliography.



Bjerg-trolde

The bjerg-trolde's abilities are identical to those of an ordinary troll. However, it lives in desert and hilly regions, and its hide is brown to tan.

Bug-a-boo

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any subterranean*

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Tribal*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivorous*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low (5-7)*

TREASURE: *Individuals J (C)*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

NO. APPEARING: *4-24*

ARMOR CLASS: *7 (10)*

MOVEMENT: *12*

HIT DICE: *1 + 1*

THAC0: *19*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Opponents have -2 on surprise*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*

SIZE: *M (5' tall)*

MORALE: *Steady (11-12)*

XP VALUE: *65*

Bug-a-boos look like small and frail bugbears, and they are often mistaken for their larger kin, especially since they can often be found on the outskirts of bugbear territory. The 'boos live off whatever they are able to scavenge from bugbear activities. If seven or more 'boos are encountered, it is 30% likely that they have a bugbear leader close by. Occasionally, 'boos may be taken in by a bugbear tribe and used as expendable front-line troops.

'Boos use whatever weapons are available, usually ones of inferior craftsmanship. 'Boos speak their own dialect of the bugbear tongue, which anyone who knows the latter language can understand. They get along well with other humanoids.



Callicantzari

Callicantzari (singular: callicantzaros) is a name most often used to describe centaurs, but it may also be used in naming forlarren, hybsil, korreds, satyrs, lamia, and wemics. See "The Ungrateful Dead" in DRAGON issue #138 for a description of this creature as an undead, ghoul-like monster.

Cwn wybr

The cwn wybr are simply hell hounds with wings (MV 12, 24 fly (D); XP + 1 HD modifier). Although too small to make good mounts, cwn wybr make formidable opponents in the sky. Cwn wybr will hunt down any flying creature they can catch, and they are sometimes tamed by fire giants. They interbreed with normal hell hounds to produce either winged or normal offspring.

Duergar
Dwarf

Elf

Elf, drow

Elf, sylvan
Elfin cat



Far darrig

These larger than usual leprechauns (HD 1 - 1; SZ S (3' tall); XP 420) travel in groups of 1-4 and dress in red—but, unlike red caps, they don't use blood for a dye. Far darrig possess a mildly dangerous sense of humor; their favorite pastime consists of playing practical jokes on lawful beings (e.g., putting a beehive in a paladins armor). In addition to the usual leprechaun powers, a far darrig can cast one *cantrip* spell per round. It can also cast mage spells from scrolls and, if a spell book is available, can memorize one-first-level spell per day.

Geanncanac

The geanncanac are closely related to the far darrig. The only noticeable difference between the two subraces is that the geanncanac are more malicious, having an alignment of chaotic evil. They will play cruel and often deadly tricks on all who fall into their clutches.

Hound-of-the-hill

The hounds-of-the-hill are large dogs with white coats and red ears. They share the statistics for war dogs (see the *Monstrous Compendium*, "Dog") except for having 3 HD, THAC0 17, a bite doing 3-9 hp damage, and the ability to run at 15 when following prey in a straight line (XP 65). The hounds-of-the-hill are close cousins of the cooshee (*Monster Manual II*), and they may even be a cooshee/common-dog crossbreed. Though the hounds have been known to run with the cooshee, the cooshee seem to regard the hounds-of-the-hill as inferiors. Because of their poor camouflage, the hounds-of-the-hill are not highly valued by the sylvan elves. These hounds are most commonly seen in the company of half-elves, who feel some kinship to these animals. Once dally, a hound-of-the-hill can bark loudly, causing all within 120' to make saving throws vs. spells or be *confused* for 2-8 rounds.



Lidevic

The lidevic is a vampire without the ability to *shape* change into bat form (so it cannot travel aerially except into *gaseous form*), and it cannot summon animals to assist it. However, the lidevic can *polymorph* itself three times a day (for an unlimited duration) into the image of a victim's absent or dead loved one; the lidevic has continuous *ESP* and can search a potential victim's mind while the lidevic drifts nearby in *gaseous form*. This tactic is especially effective at night when the moon is full. The lidevic can be destroyed in the same ways as can a vampire, and it has all other traits that vampires share (XP 3,000).

Makva

Makva are basically identical in game statistics to night hags, except that they cannot travel into the Ethereal or Astral planes. Thus they cannot "ride" sleeping victims, nor do they need or make special periapts. They cannot cast *gates* to summon evil creatures, either. Because of this deficiency and their chaotic-evil alignment, makva are banished from night hag "society" and are usually found on the edges of wild forests. Like night hags, makva are able to employ magic missile and *ray of enfeeblement* three times a day, at the eighth level of ability. They are also able to cast *know alignment*, *sleep*, and *polymorph self* at will (the *sleep* power is of the normal sort). Additionally, they have the ability of *advanced illusion*, this being the source of many gingerbread houses that lost wayfarers report; they can cast this spell four times per day.

Makva are invulnerable to *charm*; *sleep*, *fear*, and fire- and cold-based attacks. Silver or +3 (or better) magical weapons are required to harm a makva. Makva have olive-green skin and coarse black hair (XP 4,000).



Norke

Norkes are closely related to orcs (perhaps with a little hobgoblin in their veins) and look very much like their kin, sharing the same game statistics except as follows: AC 4 (10); MV 9 (12 w/o armor); HD 1 (5-8 hp); Dmg by weapon type, + 1 for strength; XP 35 and up; chain mail usually used. Norkes live only in mountainous areas, where they attack unwary travelers. They look down on orcs and smaller humanoids, enslaving them if possible.

Oread

Oreads are a subrace of nymphs found in mountainous regions. Their abilities and attributes are the same as nymphs, with the addition of the ability to cast *control winds* as 12th-level druids; they may do so three times per day.

Prikolic

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any
FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Nil*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Night*
DIET: *Nil*
INTELLIGENCE: *Non-*
TREASURE: *Nil*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
NO. APPEARING: *1-6*
ARMOR CLASS: *7*
MOVEMENT: *6 (9 in werewolf form)*
HIT DICE: *4*
THAC0: *17*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1 weapon (1 bite in werewolf form)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-8 (3-8 in werewolf form)*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*
SIZE: *M*
MORALE: *Special*
XP VALUE: *270*

The prikolics are dead werewolves that have been animated as zombies. Prikolics initially appear to be normal zombies, but there is a 25% chance each time one takes damage that it will change into an undead "wolf-man" form, dropping its weapons

and biting savagely. In werewolf form, only +1 or better or silver weapons will hit them. Cold-based, sleep, hold, charm, and all mind-affecting and death-magic spells have no effect on the prikolics, although they may be turned by a cleric as shadows. Holy water does 2-8 hp damage to these creatures.

Ragnhilder

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Rocky or mountainous terrain*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Group*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

TREASURE: *Q (C)*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

NO. APPEARING: *1-8*

ARMOR CLASS: *7*

MOVEMENT: *15*

HIT DICE: *4*

THACO: *17*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *3*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-6/1-6/1-8 or by weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Hurl rocks*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Regeneration, camouflage*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*

SIZE: *L (9' tall)*

MORALE: *Elite (14)*

XP VALUE: *420*

The ragnhilder are as large as normal trolls but are weaker (18 strength, +2 damage) and sometimes use hand-to-hand weapons. Their favorite form of attack is to hurl 5-10 lb. rocks out to 60', doing 1-6 hp damage. The ragnhilder have stone-gray hides that conceal them 60% of the time in rocky terrain.

Red cap

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate forests and ruins*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Omnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

TREASURE: *G (reduce coinage by 90%)*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

NO. APPEARING: *1*

ARMOR CLASS: *4*

MOVEMENT: *15*

HIT DICE: *5*

THACO: *15*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *3*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-6/1-6/1-3 or by weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Hurl rocks*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*

SIZE: *S (4' tall)*

MORALE: *Steady (12)*

XP VALUE: *420*

Believed by some authorities to be a subrace of leprechauns, the red caps are closely related to the far darrig and geannacan. Red caps are remarkably strong, having strengths of 18 (+2 to weapons damage). Red caps occupy abandoned castles and towers, from which they drop rocks onto passersby for 1-4 hp damage per 10' fallen. The red caps use the victim's blood to dye their hair and caps. Though they aren't undead, the red caps may be turned by a cleric as shadows because of their innate terror of priests. Only swords (magical or not) of all weapons will do damage to these creatures; spells have normal effects, however. Red caps have long claws and sharp teeth which they use in combat. Red caps often (70%) carry staves, of which 10% are magical.

Saint Elmo's fire

Saint Elmo's fire are will-o'-wisps that live over water. They usually appear before a violent storm, during which they feed off the life-force of the dying sailors.

Skovtrolde

The skovtrolde are neutral-evil wood trolls found in dark forests. Their statistics are the same as for normal trolls, except for these changes: #AP 1-20; HD 8; THACO 13; SZ L (8' tall). They have low to average intelligence and often make their lairs in trees. Some skovtrolde (30%) carry crude long bows; their arrows are -2 to hit and do 1-4 points damage. These wood trolls have skin that is dark-green and covered with brown blotches. It is 85% likely that the skovtrolde will not be seen in a vegetated environment. If 15 or more trolls are present, they are 70% likely to have treasure type E.

Holbytla



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The Rules of the Game

How can you teach someone to role-play? Here's one system

by Thomas M. Kane

Have you ever tried to teach someone how to role-play? The rule books make no sense to a beginner; they contain reams of data but almost never actually explain how one plays. The game master (GM) and players must teach new players the rules, clearly and entertainingly. Although every new player learns in a different way, there are certain processes that you, as the GM, will always need to explain.

Before the game

A new player has to have some desire to role-play before he will listen to your explanations. Tell him about exciting adventures you have had (but don't overdo

it). Explain the setting of your campaign and suggest inspirational reading, such as mythology or fantasy novels. These early "lessons" need not be dissertations—deliver them long before the game, in normal conversation.

Beginners want to start playing immediately. Unfortunately, most role-playing games consist of an unstructured crossfire of ideas, questions, and jargon, all of which quickly bewilder a new player. Give the new player a short introduction before his first game. Make it both direct and simple—never ramble about "escaping inward" or "exploring the realms of your imagination." Explain that each person pretends to be a character in a story and simply tells the group what he or she wants to do. And since the player characters (PCs) might not be able to do everything their players want, dice are used to decide if they succeed or fail.

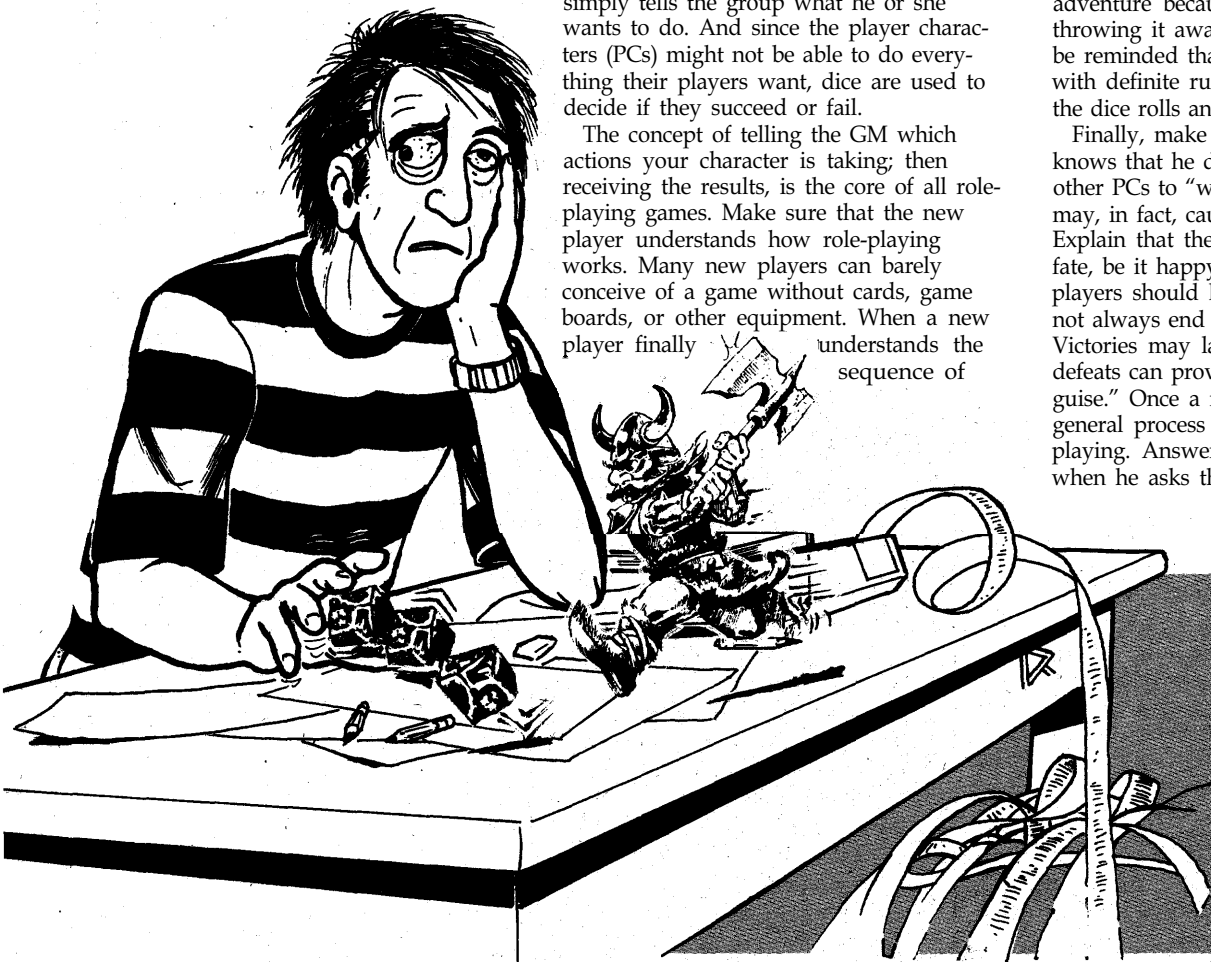
The concept of telling the GM which actions your character is taking; then receiving the results, is the core of all role-playing games. Make sure that the new player understands how role-playing works. Many new players can barely conceive of a game without cards, game boards, or other equipment. When a new player finally understands the sequence of

play, he often worries that role-playing rules are too simple—that all players do is talk. Assure him that the GM plans adventures in advance, and that role-playing is as challenging as any game.

After outlining the sequence of play, describe your functions as the game's GM. Explain that you are both an author and a referee—whatever you say is true, even if players disagree. The GM maintains and controls the game environments for the PCs. You might have to steer the new player between two opposing misconceptions. Some new players feel limited to making prescribed moves. My first fantasy-game character carried a spare suit of plate mail throughout his first adventure because there were no rules for throwing it away. Other new players must be reminded that they are playing a game with definite rules. They must abide by the dice rolls and cannot "fudge."

Finally, make sure that your student knows that he does not need to kill the other PCs to "win" (and that such actions may, in fact, cause trouble in the game). Explain that the party shares the same fate, be it happy, tragic, or neither. New players should know that adventures do not always end in either a gain or a loss. Victories may later seem Pyrrhic, while defeats can prove to be "blessings in disguise." Once a new player understands the general process of the game, let him start playing. Answer further questions only when he asks them.

Continued on page 70



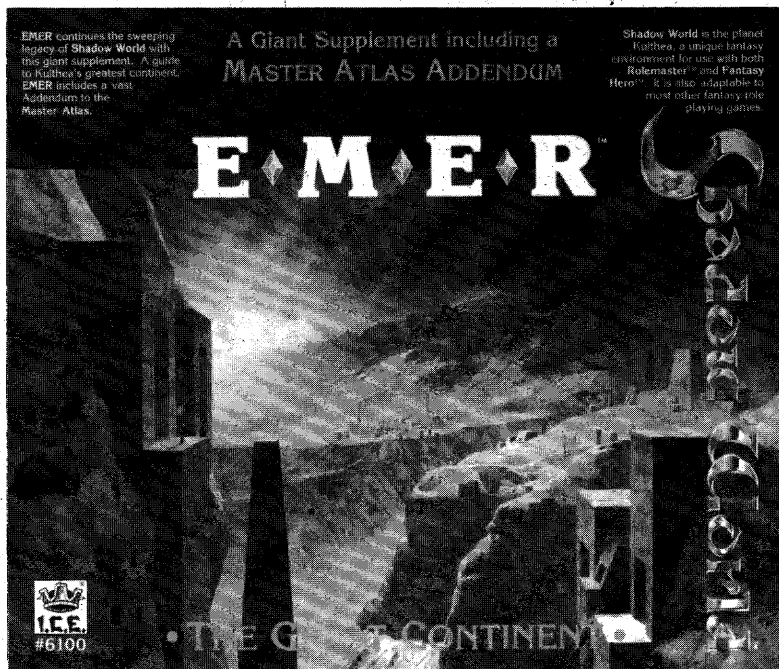
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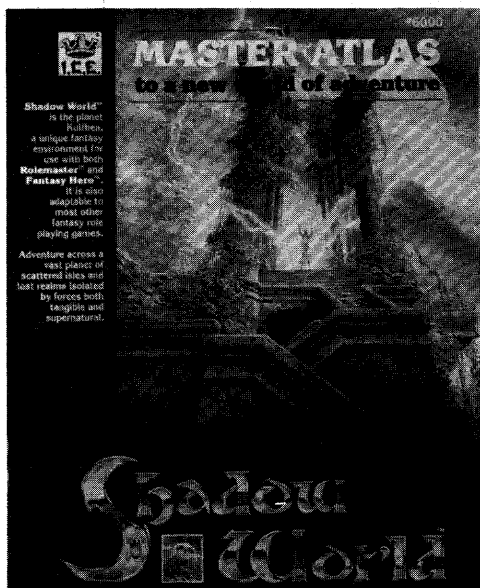
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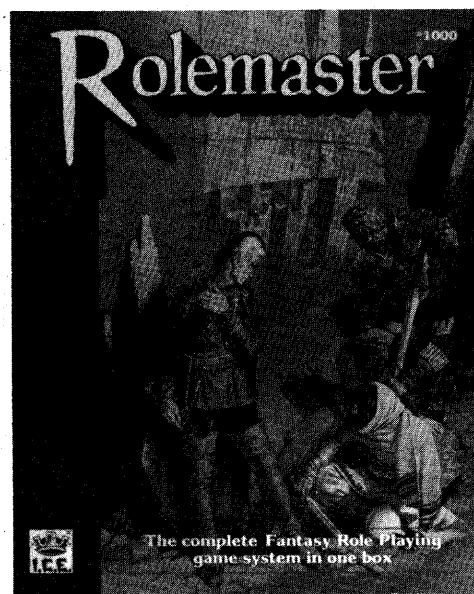
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The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

Part 6: A culture with a different sense of taste

by Bruce A. Heard

This series chronicles the adventures of an Alphatian explorer and his crew as they journey across the D&D® Known World in their skyship. The information herein may be used to expand D&D campaigns using the Gazetteer series.

from the Journals of
prince haldemar of haaken
lord admiral of the mightiest Empire
captain of the ever-victorious
princess ark
imperial explorer, etc., etc.

Hastmir 4, 1965: Last night, Lady Abovombe and I had a fine dinner in my quarters. We spoke at length of the potential for enhanced cultural exchanges between our nations. I am convinced she is perceiving a certain charm in my Alphatian manners—or perhaps it is my gray hair. I got very close to a more personal approach to the subject but was interrupted by my little bat companion's sudden tantrum in its cage. Lady Abovombe took pity on the furry thing, pampered and petted it, then returned to her cabin.

The bat stared at me all along. I could have sworn I have seen that look before.

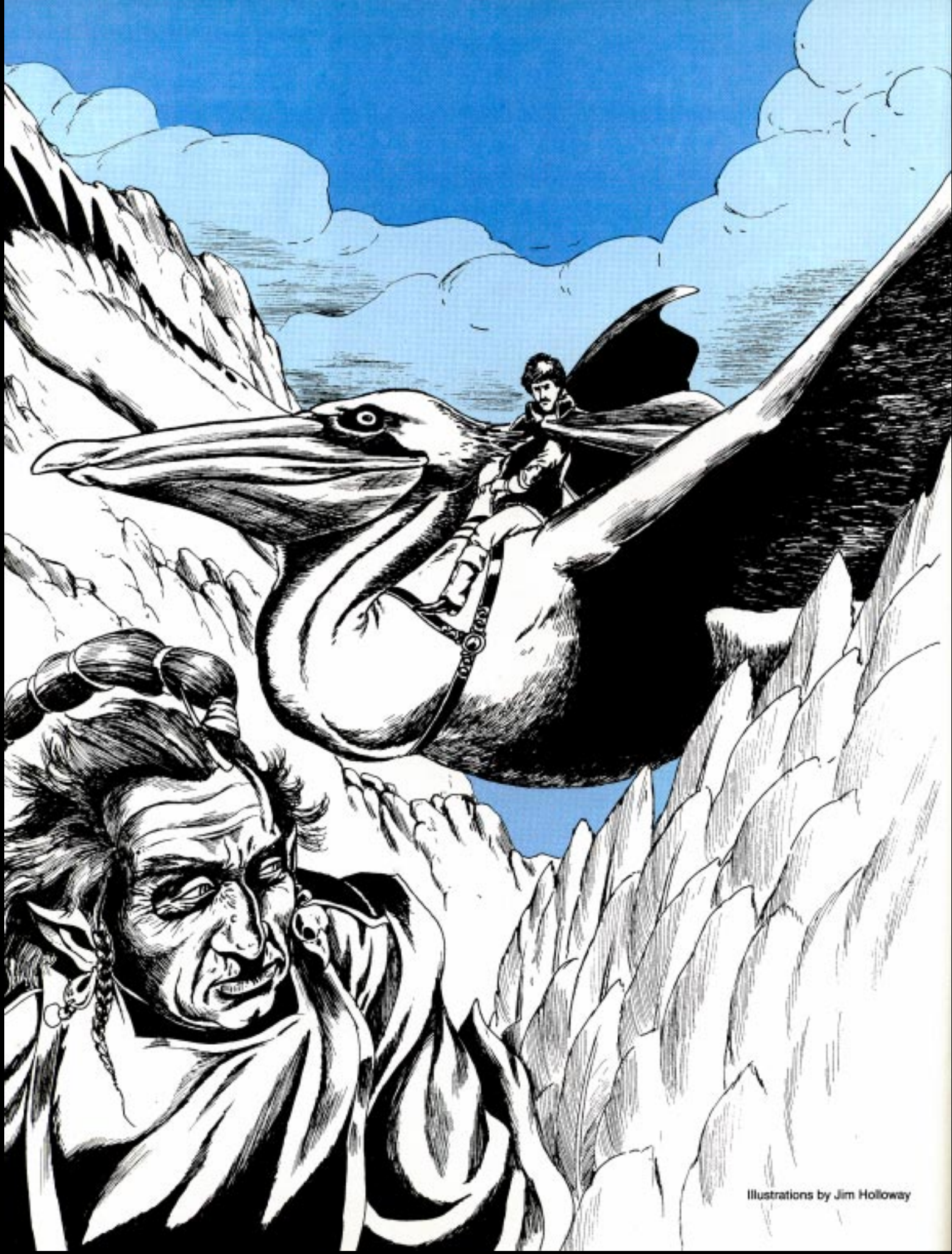
The air is much cooler now that we have reached the Wyrms Strait, on the southern coast of the Vulture Peninsula. The crew has switched to winter uniforms. Many of the Cestian squires are in sick bay with chills; they are not used to colder weather. We are proceeding due west.

Hastmir 6, 1965: The water here is dark green, thus the name of the bay—Green Bay. I ordered the ship to wait until sundown before reaching the coast. High mountains rise to the west, and I would like to examine them. There has to be some civilization in this region. Most of the coast is covered with forests of oaks, and game seems plentiful.

Hastmir 7, 1965: Aha! We have flown over several villages already. I was expecting human population, perhaps luckier people than the Varellyans of the Vulture Peninsula. Instead, we found very tall people, closer to the size of ogres but not quite as muscular. Detail were difficult to determine in the dark, so I ordered Xerdon and few boltmen to join me in an ground expedition to observe the natives. The ship is to go offshore to avoid frightening the local population and is return tomorrow night at the same place and time to pick us up.

Hastmir 8, 1965: This was a rather surprising expedition. As planned, we left the *Princess Ark* and approached a native settlement. There must have been no more than 500 people there, with children and cattle. These people are indeed as tall as ogres, strong but not as massive. Their skins are red, and most favor a style in which their black hair is tied back in long, single tassels. They wore elegant and very colorful garments made of felt and wool, including hats and boots. The most sur-





their obvious elven physical features—delicate facial lines and pointed ears. Wood was a material commonly used in the construction of their houses. The logs were ornately carved and painted. At the center of the village stood a stone totem, with many sculptures of various animal heads.

I ordered Xerdon to remain at his post, then turned *invisible* to continue my observations. I visited a few houses, which looked very clean and quite comfortable. It was late and many of the natives were sound asleep, although two woke up as I entered their houses. They must have the keen hearing of the elves.

I saw a house curiously built on top of a high menhir stone. Despite the precarious look of the house, it was very solidly built—as it should for people of that size. I levitated up to the door since I could not find a stairway. Fortunately the massive door was ajar, so I peeked in. An old female was sitting on a rocking chair, reading a leatherbound book and smoking a pipe. A large cauldron was puffing steam in the fireplace, releasing the pleasant smell of stew.

This is when I noticed the female had lowered her book and was quietly watching me. She cleared her throat and pointed at another chair, near the table—a rather large chair, of course. It was all rather embarrassing.

After a final puff on her pipe, she pulled out what looked like dried lizard tongues from a nearby jar, then tossed them into the fire, muttering some incantation. I decided not to intervene. She turned back, and said, in perfect Alpathian, “Well, visitor, why were you sneaking around our village?”

After a number of probing questions, she was apparently satisfied of my intentions. She called herself Ngezitwa in her dialect, and said her people were the N’djatwa (pronounced: un DJA twa). They seemed to be a crossbreed of elves and either ogres or giants—and a very successful mixture at that, offering the strength of giant humanoids with reasonable spell-casting abilities. It seems that they kept the best of both worlds.

The N’djatwa have lived on the shores of the Green Bay for centuries, even before the Varellyans reached their golden age. In fact, the N’djatwa had regular trade with the latter until the culture of the Vulture Peninsula was obliterated. This did not hurt the N’djatwa, since they could no longer rely on the shipment of goods from Varelly nor on any wealth created by commerce.

The N’djatwa did travel north in search of other people and met the bellicose Androkians on the Isle of Cestia. That proved disastrous to the expedition, of which only a handful returned. The N’djatwa shun the uninhabited desert, the Savannah, and the jungle. To the west lies a very large mountain range, and to the east a land of horrible monsters. The

latter is mostly surrounded with mountains, but occasionally monsters wander into their lands, near the Green River. The N’djatwa built fortified walls in several mountain passes to prevent these destructive incursions.

Most surprising was the old female’s mention of the lands that lie farther to the east. Ngezitwa said that it was the realm of the titans, huge creatures that seem to spend their time fighting and destroying each other. Most intriguing, she pointed out that she had seen another flying ship—like the Princess—in that region!

Ngezitwa casually explained with a smile that village hunters had seen the *Princess* and had followed her moves until my arrival at the village. She added, “It really is a nice ship you have, but personally I prefer riding our giant pelicans. They are quite friendly, they do not rely on powerful magic, and they have no equal when it comes to bringing a load of fresh fish to the village.” Well, I certainly felt I had been put in my place!

We spent a few hours talking about N’djatwaland and Alpathia. Ngezitwa didn’t think the N’djatwa would mind establishing ties with Alpathia. She seemed very interested in the prospect of acquiring books and anything related to magic—definitely an elven attitude. As druidess of the village, she could speak for the villagers, but a more official approach for the whole nation would be to meet the head of the clan in the city of M’banyika. The druidess would not reveal where the city was, however, and she wanted it to remain hidden. I accepted her invitation to ride with her to M’banyika.

The next morning I discovered Xerdon and his boltmen standing toe to toe with a group of N’djatwa hunters, defiantly gauging each other. Xerdon had come to the village looking for me. Fortunately, my intervention and Ngezitwa’s prevented the worst. Xerdon will dispatch a messenger to the ship and remain at the village until my return.

Hastmir 16, 1965: The flight to M’banyika was pleasant, albeit too slow for my taste. The giant pelicans are comfortable birds, but they require constant care and time to rest. Halfway to the city, Ngezitwa requested that I wear a blindfold—which I did. This however did not prevent me from seeing the path to the city, at least partially; *wizard eye* spells are still fairly useful in this condition.

The forest of oaks gave way to the pines that grow on the mountain foothills. M’banyika lies 300-400 miles southwest of Ngezitwa’s village, at about 3,000’ altitude. It is a very nice city, with white fortified walls, slender towers, small water canals, and elegant bridges. It lies halfway up a tall mountain peak, facing south. A waterfall drops several hundred feet to the city, where the water forms a lake. The city seems to have underground sewers (which alone proves to me that the N’djatwa are good architects). The streets are rather

narrow, and most residences have two to three stories. I would estimate the population at 35,000 souls. Evidently, it would be difficult to see the city from the mountain pass down below. Finding the city through the jumble of mountain peaks and ridges is an impossible feat without a guide.

I was adequately greeted at the palace and given a comfortable room to recover from the journey. Unfortunately, I had the distinct feeling the palace guard would not allow me to wander the city unescorted. I did, however, encounter little trouble in leaving my room at night without being seen. All is not as nice as it would seem. The N’djatwa are slavers. Several markets were still open, where N’djatwa bought and sold their captives—mostly gnomes and humanoids. I saw one human slave, too—a Heldanner, judging from his fair complexion and a black lion tattooed on his chest. One group of slaves was taken to what I would say was a slaughterhouse, while warriors entered the city gates, pulling several hundred captives in chains behind their lizard mounts. Apparently these N’djatwa haven’t completely shed their ogish attributes, either. It seems a great part of the food required for a large city such as M’banyika comes from these slaves; I saw almost no fields, cattle, or pastures near the city. I did not have time to investigate further.

Hastmir 17, 1965: I met His Highness Kitakanga, the Clanmaster of the N’djatwa, early in the morning. He was just as eager to learn from the empire as was Ngezitwa. There was genuine interest on his part in the establishment of some commercial and diplomatic link with the empire. However, some tension grew when I brought up the slavery issue. If the N’djatwa wish to maintain any kind of relationship with the empire, I said, it is imperative that all Alpathian subjects must be absolutely immune to any law or situation in which N’djatwa could enslave or eat them.

N’djatwa laws are quite clear about their own attitudes: Non-N’djatwa are fair game, unless noted by proclamation from His Highness Kitakanga. Even then, any law-breaker could be enslaved (and devoured). After much discussion, His Highness agreed to concede such a proclamation toward Alpathian citizens, provided Imperial Authorities would acknowledge (if not approve of) N’djatwa civil laws. Kitakanga would not negotiate that point. I had no choice but to agree to his terms and sign a provisional treaty. The Heldann slave I observed earlier was offered to me as a sign of goodwill. Fine—I did wish to question the fellow, after all.

It was time to return. The Heldanner was tied up quite literally in the manner of a sausage—no allusion intended—and given over to my custody. Ngezitwa was happy that we had come to an agreement. The return to the village was uneventful.

Hastmir 25, 1965: Ngezitwa and I traded gifts. I received a pair of exquisite felt quilts bearing pelican emblems, sev-

N'djatwa Experience Advancement

Level	Hit dice	Experience needed	Spells per level			
			1	2	3	4
Young	1	-4,800	-	-	-	-
Teen	2	-2,400	-	-	-	-
Adult	3	0	1	-	-	-
2	4	4,800	2	-	-	-
3	5	14,400	2	1	-	-
4	6	33,600	2	2	-	-
5	7	72,000	2	2	1	-
6	8	148,000	3	2	2	-
7	9	300,000	3	3	2	-
8	10	600,000	3	3	2	1
9	11	900,000	3	3	3	1
10*	11+2	1,200,000	4	3	3	2

* +2 hit point per level thereafter; Constitution adjustments no longer apply. No other spells are gained beyond level 10.

eral scrolls of N'djatwa poems, and a stuffed bread—no doubt a N'djatwa delicacy. I can only conjecture about the nature of the stuffing in that bread. It does smell good, though. Perhaps a small taste of it wouldn't hurt.

To be continued. . .

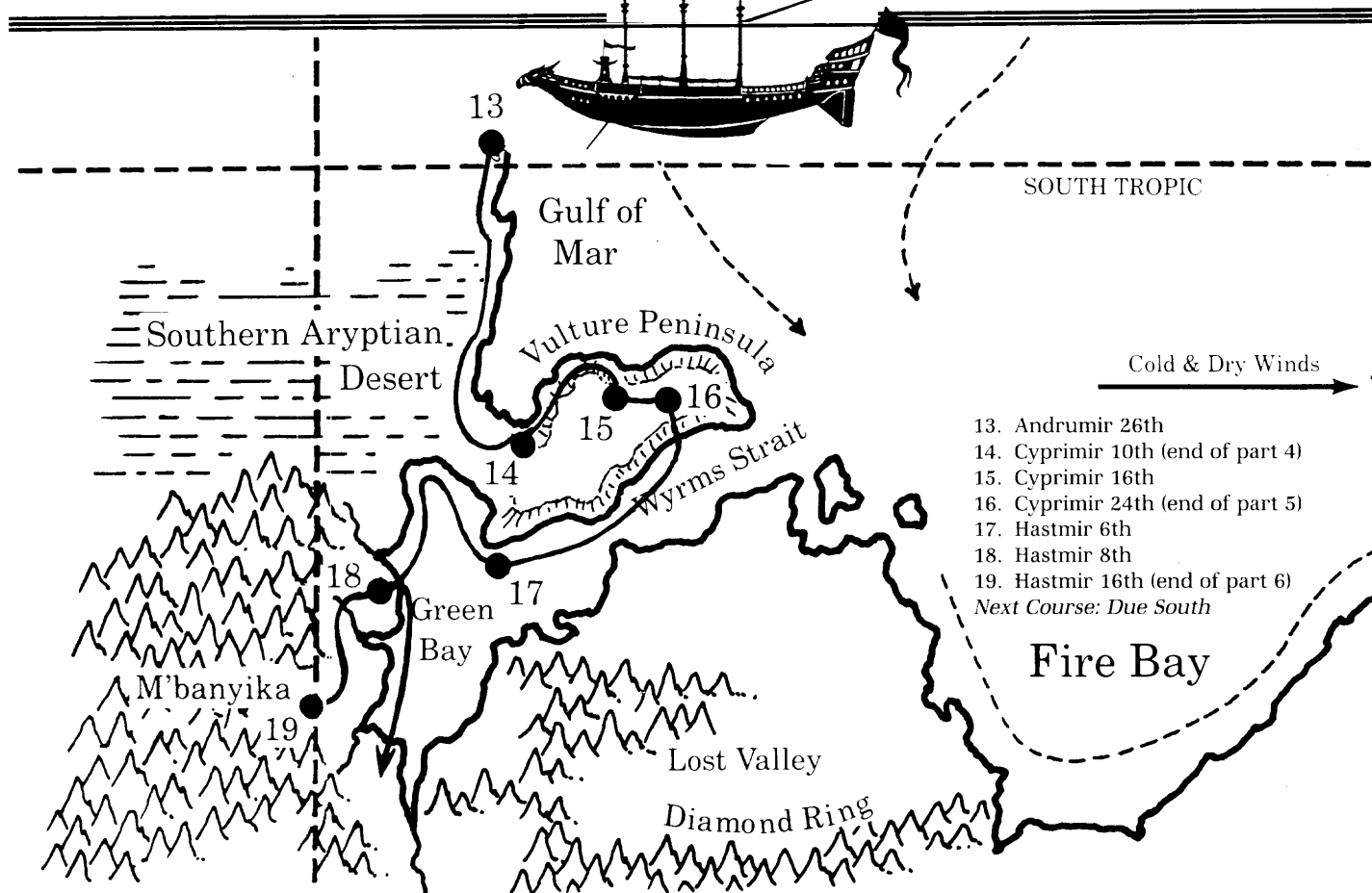
If you have already designed the areas covered by the flight of the *Princess Ark*, simply ignore the information given here (the skyship simply went by, assuming that these areas were already well known to the Alphas). If you have any comments

regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the Gazetteers, please send your inquiries to: Bruce Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc., PO. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they will certainly have our attention. Your input into the development of the D&D Known World is welcome.

The N'djatwa

Many centuries ago lived two large rival clans. One was the Nunjar, a horde of ogres; the other was the Hatwa, a tribe of mountain elves. Survival was very difficult in this land of frigid glaciers and eternal snows. Wood was scarce, and wildlife was equally rare. Relations between the Nunjar and the Hatwa teetered between all out-wars and precarious truces. None would leave the mountains, the land of their ancestors and their sacred ground. After

Continued on page 15



A Role-player's Best Friend

"User-friendly" can mean "game-friendly," too

©1990 by Michael J. D'Alfonsi

A role-player's worst enemy is disorganization. Misplacing a vital chart or spilling soda on your character sheet can put a monkey wrench in the most exciting campaign and can ruin the enjoyment of all concerned.

In my years as a referee and player, I have seen my share of clutter. I still have the binder that I used to store the notes from my first campaign. It is stuffed with loose sheets of paper that detail the history and inhabitants of the world of Zenobia. Too bad that posterity will not be able to enjoy this material due to pizza stains, smeared ink, and items that are illegible because they were written in the middle of the night.

Does any of this sound familiar to you? When I first got my computer, it was to be a study aid in college, but like many students I spent almost as much time playing games as I did studying. It was about this time that I was starting up my second role-playing campaign. I had never thought about doing any of my campaign work on a personal computer, but it all started with a player handout of history and character backgrounds. After seeing how easy that was, I slowly started to use the computer in more and more ways. Since then, almost all of my campaign material has been done on my computer.

What follows is a list of specific ways in which your computer can make role-playing much more enjoyable. Referees and players alike will have more time to role-play and will spend less time with record keeping. Groups will be able to set loftier goals, with more fun for all.



To employ my advice, you can use any type of personal computer and will need, at the very least, basic word-processing software. Some of my tips call for a database or a spreadsheet program. Even if you don't own a computer, you probably know someone who does, and most schools and colleges have them available for your use. Remember to always keep backups of all computer disks, to insure against power surges, magnetic storms, and careless roommates.

1. Store character notes. One of the biggest problems I have had, both as a player and as a referee, involves keeping track of what characters have seen and done. Handwritten notes are particularly bad for this purpose because you often need to find information fast. If it takes a player five minutes to answer a question asked by the Grand Wizard of Zod, his character may end up forever lost in an alternate dimension. If players and referees keep notes during a game session and later write them into computer files, it will not only save time but will also greatly increase the value of such notes.

2. Store monsters, NPCs, and special creations. If you are a "mad jotter" like myself, you have ideas scribbled on every scrap of paper within reach. The possessions of Cyrus Shadowstar may be written on the back of your algebra homework, while his abilities and history are on a piece of paper stuffed between the pages of the latest gaming magazine. That is no way to run a universe! With a computer, just create a file called "Shadowstar" and update it every time you have a new idea. The same goes for those nasty, slimy things you transpose from your nightmares to your dungeons. Magical items, artifacts, and new spells can all have a place on your campaign disk.

3. Create charts and tables. My favorite aspect of being a referee involves the creation of new charts and tables. Aside from having my own versions of the usual random dungeon and treasure tables, I also make encounter tables for each major section of my world. Tables and charts are also a hot trade item among referees, both for their ideas and for the actual charts. By using a word processor or a database, you can make your tables and charts crisp and readable, and your fellow referees will envy you. It is also easier to print out a new chart when the old one wears out or when it is revised than it is to retype the whole thing.

4. Create character sheets and other gaming forms. There are as many versions of the character sheet as there are players. As a referee, you know what information you want your players to have ready. Aside from the standard statistics, possessions, and capabilities, some referees are fanatics for height, weight, and age; others feel that encumbrance needs to be accurate to the nearest milligram. Whatever your preferences are, you can tailor a sheet to suit them.

Depending on your campaign and gaming style, you can also create forms for strongholds, land and property holdings, spell research details, governmental policies, or expedition plans. The possibilities are endless! You can use a word processor to make all your forms. If you want fancier forms, use a desktop publisher.

5. Write adventures and campaign notes. The greatest volume of paperwork you will produce and keep track of consists of adventures and campaign notes. Just like character notes, the facts and figures that make up a world tend to be scribbled on odd scraps of paper. If you have gone into the depth that a well-developed campaign requires, you could easily be talking about a desk full of paper scraps. The thought of wading through that much paper to find out the price of rice in Xansaw should send shivers down your spine. To help facilitate better organization (if not a cleaner room!), keep separate files on commerce, gods, armies, navies, spell locations, bandit groups, governments, guilds, secret societies, customs, festivals, holidays, travel times, laws, events . . . well, you get the picture.

A computer is especially helpful when writing adventures. Adventure locales (e.g., dungeons, secret laboratories, and space stations) are not static entities. A dungeon's inhabitants may be wiped out by a group of more powerful monsters; a lab may get a new top-secret project and have its security forces doubled; the space station may have a reactor failure and be abandoned. These places may also change due to player activity, and adventure keys should reflect their new status.

Let's face it. Rewriting an entire location key because your players wreaked havoc last time they visited it is a real hassle. If your guide is handwritten or typed, then you face this tedious task, unless you want to clutter your pages with scribbled notes. If your adventure is on a disk, you can revise those areas that require it, keep those areas that are unchanged the way they were, and print a new copy. When your players return, you (and the denizens) will be ready.

6. Make newsletters and flyers.

About 10 years ago, I was in a gaming group at my local game store. We were involved in a war game in which each player controlled a small portion of the world and was out to conquer his neighbors. The game moderator wrote a weekly "newspaper" that detailed the actions of each player for the preceding week's action. The same can be done for your role-playing campaign, especially if it is a play-by-mail group or if you have different groups of players in the same world. If you run a contemporary or futuristic campaign, this can also be an entertaining way to give your players miscellaneous details about your game setting. Area newsletters can help you share tips, successes, problems, and ideas with other players and referees.

You can also make flyers on the computer. If you need new members for your group, if you have something to sell or trade, or if you just want to meet other people who share your gaming hobby, flyers are an effective and low-cost method of advertising. Like character sheets, you can use a word processor for your flyers or a desktop publisher if you want them to look more professional.

7. Catalog magazine articles. Somewhere in the recesses of my garage lies a box filled with gaming magazines. Whenever I want to find a specific article, I have to spend the better part of an afternoon pulling them all out to sift, sort, and search for the item I want. One of these days I'm going to sit down and go through all of those magazine, and use my database to catalog them.

Databases are generally very simple to use. You set up the categories in which you want to store information, then you enter your data. The initial time you'll spend setting up the database is considerable, but once you're done you simply enter the appropriate information when you get the newest issue of whatever magazine you read regularly.

And there you have it. Your computer won't make you a better referee or make your campaign more exciting, but it will make your job a little easier and allow you to have a little more fun in the process. Anyone who has the fortitude and imagination to create a game world can surely take these hints, adapt them to his own needs, and create his own uses for a personal computer. Role-playing games are built on creativity, ingenuity, and human interaction. Let your computer help you concentrate on those things instead of record-keeping. Paperwork is a job; role-playing is an adventure.



THE ROLE OF Computers

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Patricia, and Kirk Lesser



The Hound of Shadow
(Electronic Arts)

Down in flames or up in flames: air-war and space-war games

©1990 by Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

Although it seems we concentrate on 16- and 32-bit entertainments, it doesn't mean we've given up on 8-bit games. The problem is that once you've become accustomed to the sharper graphics, outstanding sound, and faster game play of the more advanced computer systems, 8-bit games seem somewhat antiquated. However, we will still review games for the Commodore 64/128 and the Apple II computer family. Indeed, we present a few C64/128 game reviews in this column.

Reviews

Computer games ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Inline Design

5 West Mountain Road
Sharon CT 06069
(203) 364-0063

Bomber

Macintosh IIx (B&W) version \$49.95
When Apple's HyperCard appeared a couple of years ago, it was seen as a marvelous device for information processing. Many freeware HyperCard games are available in the Macintosh forums found in

online information services, but few are of commercial quality. Inline Design proves that HyperCard is can be used as a software environment for commercially viable entertainment.

Bomber places you in command of a B-17 crew during World War II, assigned bombing missions over Europe. Successful missions garner advancements in rank and rating. However, you must avoid German fighter attacks, flak, and the rigors of oxygen or heat depletion at high altitudes.

Combining digitized sound with realistic graphics, *Bomber* has the look and feel of real bomber missions. You start the game by responding to the Base Commander's Headquarters, where you are assigned a bombing run. You are the pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, navigator, and gunners for your plane, so you should listen to the assignment and the suggested route to the target. By using the game's Photo Recon booklet (don't lose it like I did—this is the game's copy protection!), you become the bombardier and aim your bombsight over the landscape, trying to find the target identified in the photo. This is not as easy as you might believe. When you locate the target, you press the salvo button and a voice cries out "Bombs away!" You see the explosions below through your bomb sight. Then it's time to fly home.

When attacked by fighters, you operate as a gunner and track enemy fighters through one of six gun positions on the B-17. You use twin 50-caliber machine-guns that carry 2,000 rounds each. The closer you allow a fighter to approach, the better your-odds of a kill. However, your personnel can also be killed. Other dire circumstances include: engine, heater, oxygen, and landing-gear hits; gun jams; cockpit fires; and even a runaway prop. In the latter case, if you don't "feather" that prop within a second or so, you're out of control. Thank heavens there is a bail-out option for the crew!

Bomber is extremely enjoyable and is recommended for all Macintosh gamers.

Omnitrend Software

P.O. Box 733
West Simsbury CT 06092
(203) 658-6917

Breach 2 \$49.95
PC/MS-DOS version ****
Commodore Amiga version ****1/2

The *Breach* scenarios have always been popular, especially with gamers who enjoy



Breach 2 (Omnitrend)



Breach 2 (Omnitrend)

squad-level combat. *Breach 2* has improved the game's interface and graphics, and it fully supports CGA, EGA, VGA, and

Tandy 16-color graphics boards. The game requires 512K of RAM to run and DOS version 3.0 or higher. Both the AdLib and

the CMS music cards are supported, although the only music we heard was the opening theme when the game is booted. A mouse is supported but is not necessary to play the game.

To play the game, you first create a squad leader. The squad leader is a soldier of the interstellar Federated Worlds Special Forces. The squad leader's goal is to utilize his squad of marines effectively in winning different scenarios. If your squad leader is killed, you lose the scenario and are bumped out of your mission back to the main menu.

We played *Breach 2* with an EGA card and found the graphics to be quite pleasing except for once instance. Should one of your Marines use a grenade, the explosion usually paints the ground a pinkish color. Your Marine characters tend to get lost in this color mix. We also lost a Marine in the deep green of the forest and could only spot him when we cycled through our personnel and found the white square outlining him in the forest.

The Commodore Amiga version does not possess this difficulty. The graphics are crisp and extremely well-defined on-screen. In fact, the addition of digitized sound—especially when an enemy soldier is hit—makes the game just a little bit better than the PC/MS-DOS version. The only drawback to the Amiga format is that the game is approximately half as fast as the PC/MS-DOS version. However, we did prefer the overall feel and look of the Amiga version of *Breach 2*.

You control every action of each Marine, including your all-important squad leader. To start, the main menu is divided into three windows. The window on the far left of the screen displays the available scenarios. (Once you are familiar with the game, you can create any number of your own scenarios—a very nice feature!) The upper right window displays any squad leaders you have already created or allows you to Make a new squad leader. By highlighting a scenario and a squad leader's name, you can then Play a sequence after you name it.

Once your game is ready, you hit the "P" key and the scenario starts. Each Marine enters through an entry square. As the Marine appears, you are informed of his statistics. Icons allow you to get, drop, or use items your soldier is carrying. Make certain as your Marines appear that you arm them with an appropriate weapon!

There are usually objects that can be retrieved around the entry square, ranging from weapons to medical kits. Keep an



War of the Lance (SSI)

eye on the attributes of each Marine and equip him appropriately.

You move from point to point by determining the Marine's route. For example, if you are using the mouse, you point the cursor in the center of the Marine's on-screen figure, hold down the mouse button, and then drag to the location you wish him to occupy. When you release the mouse button, the Marine moves to that spot. Depending upon the number of movement points used in that move, you can now have the Marine complete another action. Perhaps there is an adversary two squares away. You move the on-screen cursor onto the enemy figure, then hold the mouse button down. This causes your active Marine to fire at the enemy. Misses and hits are indicated on-screen.

By clicking on the "Next" icon or by pressing the "N" key, you move on to the next Marine. Should your current Marine exhaust his movement points, you will be automatically cycled to the next soldier. When you have moved all of your men, you can select the "Next" icon, which cycles the game forward. It's now time for your enemies to make their moves and attacks.

This procedure continues until either you meet the victory conditions or you and your men are killed. It takes a great deal of strategy to win even the simplest of the scenarios! You must remember that, although on the offensive, you should consider a defensive posture at times to defeat your enemies. Just as you can throw grenades and use rocket launchers, so can the enemy! There's nothing more disheartening than seeing a group of your Marines be disintegrated by a grenade attack from the hostiles. Also, make certain that none of your men is in the way of your own fire.

We really *enjoy* *Breach 2* and are looking forward to any number of coming scenarios for this game system. It utilizes the Interlocking Game System, meaning that characters created and nurtured through *Breach 2* will be usable in other games developed by Omnitrend. The PC/MS-DOS version offers a lot of entertainment for its dollar value, especially as you can create your own scenarios. We recommend you look at *Breach 2* as a "must try" at your software retailers for addition to your game library.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

675 Almanor Avenue
Sunnyvale CA 94086-2901
(408) 737-6800

War of the Lance

C64/128 version \$39.95

If you enjoy tactical combat war games, *War of the Lance* is certainly one of the best new offerings in this genre. SSI almost founded the war-game genre over a decade ago and continues to produce high-quality strategy games. *War of the Lance* takes a different tack than other strategy war games—this time you're dealing with fantastic armies and navies in the environment of TSR's AD&D® game. Skill at commanding your armies is not lessened, but heightened. Try commanding elven infantry as they go up against red dragons. Or attempt the siege of a fortified city with human infantry and mages.

War of the Lance is set in the DRAGONLANCE® saga world created by TSR. Dragons have been banished for over a millennium, but now the Queen of Darkness, Takhisis, has brought the evil dragons back from exile. In concert with the Highlord alliance of Neraka, the dragons attempt to completely control Ansalon. Their armies literally pour out of the Khalkist Mountains.

On the side of good, you move your units into positions to oppose the evil hordes, and you also endeavor, through diplomacy, to awaken the neutral countries and bring them into action against the Highlord and his minions. Each side also possesses champions who are constantly on quests seeking out those special items that could turn the tide of battle. For example, champions on the side of good must hunt for Solamnic Knight Armor, the Medallion of Faith, or Dragonlances. The successful quests for the Highlord (evil) side include the hunt for the Dragon Lord Armor and Minotaur banners. You can even designate units from your armies to attempt to subvert these quests. However, don't forget that the enemy is also attempting to subvert your quests as well.

War of the Lance is a very time-consuming war game. The only drawback that we found to play is that each "round" takes a long time to complete. This, perhaps, is because it runs on a C64/128, which requires a number of disk accesses and takes a lot of time to "think" about each move due to its limited memory. The graphics are certainly not earth-shaking. Icons represent all troops. We recommend



Time Bandit (Microdeal)



Gunboat: River Combat (Accolade)

you not bother with the graphic depiction of battles as this only slows down play even more.

This strategic fantasy war game is going to be difficult for novice gamers to become accustomed to playing. The battles will seem heavily weighted against you if you are playing the good forces. The scenario gives the early advantage to the Highlord and his forces of evil. However, through careful execution of troop movement, battle planning, and diplomacy, you can pull Ansalon through this ordeal. The game is playable by one or two players. We hope to see this fantasy war game released for other systems as well, systems that might increase the speed of play.

Microdeal

576 South Telegraph
Pontiac MI 48053
(313) 377-8998

Time Bandit

**** 1/2

Commodore Amiga version \$39.95

The ancient saying that you can't tell a book by its cover certainly holds true with *Time Bandit*. The packaging could not be called an artistic masterpiece—but a great arcade-adventure game awaits you inside! The programmers not only offer you colorful, exciting arcade tests of skill, but they have also blended in a smattering of text adventure scenarios. As the bandit, you'll answer riddles while deciphering the clues to unlock the mystery.

As a time traveler, you select the land you wish to enter by moving through Timegates. Each Timegate takes you to a different land, such as the Ghost Town or the Omega Complex. You can fire missiles at onrushing evil guardians and, when you destroy them, receive points called cubits. Earn 1,000 cubits and you earn an extra life—well worth the effort, believe us. You'll soon find that the dangers will have used up your starting 10 lives.

What makes *Time Bandit* even more entertaining is its two-player mode. Each player has a bandit, one dressed in light blue with a playing screen in the upper right corner, and the other dressed in yellow with a playing screen in the upper left corner. If one Bandit dies, he might even return to the game as a Shadow to either plague or assist the other player.

Look for scrolls in the playing field. When "touched," they reveal clues about the reasons for your adventure and offer tips. Surrounded? Have your bandit stand still and press your fire button while rotating your joystick handle. He'll spray the area with missiles while turning completely about.

We have been hammering away at *Time Bandit* for nearly 30 hours. We are still a long way away from defeating the 16th level and continue to seek all of the Great Artifacts. This is a great game with above-average Amiga graphics and good sound effects. *Time Bandits* has everything an arcade gamer demands in a superior game—and more!

Strategic Studies Group
(distributed by Electronic Arts)
1747 Orleans Court
Walnut Creek CA 94589
(EA: 415-571-7171)
or
P.O. Box 261
Drummoyne 2047 AUSTRALIA

Fire King * * * *
Commodore 64/128 version Price n/a

If you own a C64/128, you should also own this fantasy action-adventure game. It is amazing to realize that this, is an 8-bit game and that the C64/128's graphics in this well-crafted and well-coded game stand up against several games running on more advanced systems. The game is not copy protected, so you can make copies of the disks using any sector utility copy program.

Arriving on two disks, *Fire King* features an astoundingly smooth interface using

the joystick. You become one of six characters and soon find yourself in your room above the town square of the town in Stormhaven Bay. (By the way, the publishers included an extremely informative map of both the town and the surrounding lands inside the fold-out game package!) The harmony of the land is controlled by the great elemental forces of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Of the four mages controlling these elements, the Fire Mage was king until he was gruesomely slain by a magical beast of superhuman strength and size. A battle reportedly was waged for hours until this horrid monster was finally slain. During the Fire Mage's funeral in the catacombs, another magical beast appeared and slaughtered the mourners. Now the beast saunters forth from the catacombs whenever it likes to dine on villagers. Food supplies are becoming exhausted. New enemies, including slimes, now roam the countryside. Someone must confront the beast in the catacombs and end the terror. Guess what—that someone is you!

As with any good adventure game, the joystick moves you in any one of eight directions and fires the crossbow that you are carrying. But don't expect to hit creatures too far away.

The screen displays everything you'll need during your adventure. The main window features your character, those that oppose him or her, and the "goodies" lying around to be picked up. Get as many keys as you can—there are more doors than you can shake a crossbow at. You might also find Boots of Water or Boots of Fire Walking, Rings of Invisibility, and the much-needed and highly admired gold, with which you can purchase new weapons and other items. The Thieves' Guild has many useful items to purchase, including information critical to the success of your quest.

Below the main window are your seven pockets. Within each pocket you can secrete as many as nine items. Always keep an eye on the pockets to make certain you have exactly what you need for the stage of the adventure you are currently experiencing. For example, Boots of Water Walking will be mighty handy when you descend into the sewers.

Included with the game is an in-depth walk-through for the first adventure that runs nearly four pages. We recommend you try the game without resorting to these clues, although even after reading them, there is still much more you'll need to do before you can win the game.

Fire King doesn't advance the state of adventure gaming, but it does offer fast arcade action in a fantasy adventure that is quite exciting. Certainly, C64/128 gamers will want to check this one out.

MicroIllusions

17408 Chatsworth Street
Granada Hills CA 91344
(818) 360-3715

Laser Squad

Commodore Amiga version \$39.95

This offering is as impressive as *Breach 2* and constitutes an alternative software adventure for squad-level combat. Although *Laser Squad* does not offer your characters the possibility of advancing into as-yet-unreleased scenarios, it does offer some of the finest graphics and sound yet reviewed in any Amiga game we've seen.

One or two may play. After the initial deployment of your troops, it's hunt and destroy. Included with *Laser Squad* are five scenarios that may be played at varying levels of difficulty—but the easiest level was certainly no snap! After you have selected the scenario you wish to play, your squad appears on-screen. You must then assign each of your squad members armor and weapons. As you won't really have a feel for the scenario until you've tried it a few times, initial equipment purchases may be incorrect for the mission.

Every weapon needs ammunition, too. Although the weapons you purchase come fully loaded, we guarantee you'll need to reload at some point within your mission. In fact, a couple of extra clips might not be a bad idea.

Beware of where you shoot! For example, in mission two ("Moonbase Assault"), the objective of the squad is to destroy as many databanks and analysers as possible. You can take aim or use automatic fire on targets; we recommend the former, many other objects are lying around—such as gas cylinders. Strike a gas cylinder with inaccurate automatic fire, and your squad members might soon pick shrapnel out of their teeth.

Each member of your platoon has various capabilities, so try to take advantage of their skills. Also remember you cannot fire upon any target unless it is in your line of sight. Your scanner will only reveal enemy units you've already spotted.

All control is performed by using the joystick and command menus. When you Select a squad member, you see his name,

the number of movement (action) points he can use this round, the object used by this member, the terrain your soldier is standing on, and the protective value of that terrain. Also revealed are the minimum number of points needed for opportunity fire—keep these in mind if you think the enemy is close, and don't use all of your action points in a headlong rush to destroy a target. Position your squad members so that any enemy unit coming through a door or down a hallway can be targeted for opportunity fire.

Laser Squad is really another exceptional purchase for the Commodore Amiga gamer. A version is also available for the Atari ST computer. We highly recommend you include this exciting strategy squad-level battle game in your software library.

Mastertronic

18001 Cowan, Suite A
Irvine CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

MEGA Pack

C64/128 version \$34.99

This offering is a group of 10 games previously released in Europe, all bundled together in one package. Considering that the games carry creation dates of 1986 or 1987, you're getting a good dose of C64/128 games that were popular several years ago. The technology in the games isn't state of the art, although some of the games fare better than others. The package includes:

Rebounder—Contains unusual perspectives as you bounce through obstacles: ***

Monty on the Run—It crashed every time we tried to play it: X

Jack the Nipper II—A rather cute arcade game that has the on-screen character running around in Africa: ***/2

Bulldog—The music and the action are among the best of this group: ****

Krakout—One of our favorites, this is **Breakout** with a different flavor: ****

Future Knight—You're inside a spaceship trying to find a princess in distress; a really dumb game: *

(The following games required that the joystick be moved from port #2 to port #1. No instructions are given regarding this necessity.)

Cosmic Causeway—It has 24 "roads" to travel; quite interesting: ***

Trailblazer—Our favorite on this disk; racing on Cosmic Causeway roads against the clock or against a robot. This one was really fun: *****

Northstar—Accidentally run into the opposition and it's over; hard to control: *

THING Bounces Back—Stop an evil computer from producing evil toys; this offering features more originality than the others but is hard to control: **

Overall, **Mega Pack** offers at least three worthwhile games at a reasonable cost.

News and new products

Accolade (408-985-1700) has introduced **Gun boat: River Combat**. Simulation gamers will experience tight-quarters river combat and the dread of a possible ambush around the next bend. You're in command of a high-speed Patrol Boat Riverine as it embarks on more than 20 realistic missions along the uncertain jungle rivers of modern day Vietnam, Colombia, and Panama. **Gunboat** is scheduled for release for PC/MS-DOS computers at \$49.95.

Activision (408-329-0800) has released the action-arcade version of the smash hit movie, **Die Hard**. You assume the role of John McLane, an off-duty New York police officer who is suddenly thrown into a rescue mission. He must race against the clock, utilizing his strength and cunning to rescue his wife and other hostages. The price is \$39.95 for PC/MS-DOS computers.

The Avalon Hill Game Company (301-254-9200) has released **Legends of the Lost Realm** for Macintosh computers. Players may be fighters, magicians, shamans, or thieves in pursuit of a magical staff hidden deep with the walls of Taris-Cirinik, a fallen fortress. The game introduces as martial arts, weapon making, and alchemy. The price is \$39.95.

Dynamix (503-343-0772) has announced the release of Simulation Module #1 for its **A-10: Tank Killer** flight simulator. This is a one-disk add-on that increases to seven the new missions that can be played individually or back-to-back in the campaign. The price is \$12.95.

Electronic Arts (415-571-7171) is preparing everyone for the arrival of **LHX Attack Chopper**. Although this experimental light helicopter is years away from actual completion, EA is bringing the flying vehicle to your computer right away. Gamers will command the skies with smooth 3-D graphics, 12 external views, and unheard-of maneuverability. The simulation is for PC/MS-DOS computers for \$59.95.

A third new game from EA is **The Hound of Shadow**, for the Commodore Amiga and the Atari ST computer. Priced at \$39.95, the game features a new system

called Timeline. You start by creating a Timeline character and his skills. As you play the game, the character's attributes affect the events and perhaps even the outcome of the game. The offering is inspired by the works of H. P. Lovecraft and represents an original contribution to the Cthulhu Mythos. The adventure is set in England in the 1920s; you must unravel the secrets of arcane lore and discover the horrors and supernatural doings that lurk beneath the surface of London.

Another EA offering is **Centurion: Defender of Rome** for PC/MS-DOS computers. This game offers strategy, role-playing, great graphics, and cinematic animation to recreate the battles, diplomacy, and glamorous games of Imperial Rome. You start the game as a young officer in control of a Roman legion. With your skills as a diplomat and soldier, you must defend Rome while bringing the provinces around you under Roman rule. The price is \$49.95.

Also distributed by EA is the new UBI offering, **Iron Lord**. This epic adventure/arcade game is available for the Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, and C64/128 computer. In **Iron Lord**, you are a noble knight whose uncle has seized the throne and killed your father, the king. It's up to you to overthrow him and recover your birthright. The price is \$39.95.

From Cinemaware, distributed by Electronic Arts, comes **Federation**, a strategic space and combat game that features one of the largest universes ever created—over eight million planets to explore! There are 15 increasingly difficult missions involving investigations, evacuations, interceptions, and destruction of the enemy. Each successful mission brings the player closer to earning a coveted promotion or the money essential to upgrade the effectiveness of his spaceship. The price is \$49.95 for Commodore Amiga, C64/128, and Atari ST systems.

Interstel, also distributed by Electronic Arts, has introduced **D.R.A.G.O.N. Force**. This individual-level combat simulation puts you in command of an elite anti-terrorist strike force assigned to a series of top-secret missions around the world. It is for Commodore Amiga for \$49.95.

Kyodai (415-492-3590) has released **Curse of Babylon**, a Nintendo-style action game for the C64/128. You must save the world of Babylon and conquer zombies, rock creatures, and giant blue lizards that terrorize this once-peaceful land. Stock up on arms, magic, and healing potions. The price is \$24.95.

Medalist International (301-771-1151) has introduced *X-Men: Madness in Murder-world*, a multilevel strategy super-hero adventure from Paragon Software and Medalist International, a division of Micro-Prose Software. This Marvel Comics adventure is released for PC/MS-DOS computers for \$39.95. A C64/128 version costs \$34.95.

Also from Medalist is *Weird Dreams*. Imported from England, this computer game has a soccer ball that devours knife-wielding girls, a giant killer bee that wants your cotton candy, a grandfather clock that points the way, and a lawn mower that grinds you to a pulp. The bizarre scenes, puzzles, and arcade-style challenges in *Weird Dreams* are available for \$39.95 for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions, with PC/MS-DOS and C64/128 version due soon.

Clue corner

Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)

The battle with Dracandros in the Red Tower is perhaps more a tactical issue than a test of fighting or magical prowess (this cannot be said about the final showdown with Tyranthraxus!). After you get rid of the final batch of wyverns, you can Encamp, Rest to replenish spells, and Fix the group's hit points. Then you get out to a big courtyard, and there is Dracandros, with a retinue of six dark elf warriors and six efreet (10 HD, AC 2). The trick here is speed, because you appear at one end of the courtyard and they appear at the other end. There are about 18 spaces between the two groups.

Since both the efreet and the dark elves have more movement allowance than you, they will bottle your group near the entrance while Dracandros fries your people with lightning bolts. The good tactic is to cast a Haste spell before you enter (as well as other usual protective spells) and run like blazes toward Dracandros. You should aim to put your best fighter in front of him (blocking his movements), flanked by a couple of others to keep the efreet at bay, and with the spell-casters one space behind to be in range for casting Stinking Clouds (that affect the efreet very nicely).

However, first things first: At the start, a mage must throw a Dispel Magic spell at Dracandros in order to lower his armor class. A cleric must cast a Silence 10' Radius spell on one of the efreet next to Dracandros, which will prevent him from using spells. After that, you have to hack

and slash until the opposition is down, which is no mean feat. By the way, Curse and Bestow Curse spells, as well as Magic Missiles, work well against the efreet.

The battle against Tyranthraxus at the end of the adventure is particularly hard because, once you've entered the temple, you cannot rest anywhere. You have to carefully select your spells and use them sparingly against the hordes of evil minions that will confront you before the final battle.

Before entering, cast a Haste spell, a Protection From Evil spell for each character, and Enlarge or Strength spells on your best fighters. You should also have acquired the Girdle of Giant Strength in rakshasa country, so use it! Also cast Bless and Prayer.

You appear at one end of a big hall, with Tyranthraxus (as a storm giant, 19 HD, AC 0) and eight high priests at the other end. But this time the middle space is filled with margoyles (6 HD, AC 2). Your group begins combat deployed in two lines, the first line already in contact with the margoyles. Beware—the margoyles' THAC0 is rigged, since they normally have THAC0 15. Against AC - 6, they should hit only on a 21—that is, a natural 20. But they hit one of my fighters at AC -2 every other round!

This means you must carefully set up your party order before entering. The following chart shows the character placements that I'll describe:

5	4	6
2	1	3

Send your two best fighters in at positions 5 and 6, protected by Invisibility spells or by avoiding contact with the enemy, and have them go around the margoyles (there is space between them and the wall to allow passage without contact) to end up with one fighter just behind Tyranthraxus and the other behind him and to the right. If your fighters

are of high-enough level, you should receive from four to six attacks, which should be enough to put Tyranthraxus down.

Your mages (their best positions are 4 and 6, and they should definitely each have a Minor Globe of Invulnerability) should, at first, throw Fireballs and try to hit as many priests and margoyles as possible. If the fight with Tyranthraxus is not going well, they can perhaps assist the cause with an Ice Storm or Cone of Cold. The clerics should concentrate on the high priests and then the margoyles. Concentrate on immobilizing the enemy, as you can kill those helpless beasts later. Targets for any Hold spells should be the margoyles unaffected by the Fireball spells. A final piece of advice: If you win but some members of the group are killed, don't despair. They'll get resurrected at no cost in constitution!

Jordi Zamarreno
Barcelona, Spain

Neuromancer (Interplay)

Deposit your money in Bank Berne or Gemeinschaft. That way, if you go to court, you won't lose any money; if you die, you will only lose what you were holding. Also, the following databases contain AIs when you penetrate their ICE: Psychology, World Chess, NASA, Musaborind, and Free Matrix.

The following chips you can use like ICE breakers to fight AIs: sophistry, phenomenatology, and logic. Zen can be used to restore your strength during combat with an AI.

The cyberjacks for some of the zones are: 0 Cheap Hotel; 1 Gentleman Loser; and 2 Hosaka, Fuji, or Musaborind.

Here are some link and password codes: [see table].

Ben Venzke
Douglassville PA

Neuromancer Link & Password Codes

Base	Link	Access/Level	Highest level
Regular Fellows	REGFELLOW	VISITOR/1	2
Consumer Review	CONSUMEREV	REVIEW/1	2
World Chess	WORLDCHES	MEMBER/2	2
Freematrix	FREEMATRIX	CFM/1	2
Hitachi	HITACHIBIO	GENESPLICE/1	2
Psychology	PSYCHO	BABYLON/2	3
Asano	ASANOCOMP	VENDORS/2	3
Musabrink	MUSABORIND	SUBURU/1	3
Bank Berne	BOZOBANK	use sequencer 1-0	—

Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)
and **Pool of Radiance (SSI)**

1. Always REST and FIX facing a wall, preferably at the end of a hallway. This limits the number of monsters the party will have to face by at least one-third the number. In CAB, this is particularly effective in Zhentil Keep where you must face Dexam's minions after the Zhentil bond is removed.

2. To find out what magical bonus missile weapons have without having to identify them, take the following steps (this system can be used only on objects that can be joined, such as arrows and darts): Take a magical weapon whose magical bonus is already known and displayed on the equipment screen, then join that with the missile weapon, with the highlighted area on the displayed magical weapon.

3. Use the Dust of Disappearance before you enter the council chamber containing the Mulmaster Beholder Corps in Dagger

Falls. If you use it in combat, the whole party is not likely to become invisible. Also, the Behold Corps and the company will probably kill a couple of party members before the character holding the dust gets to make his move.

4. Don't waste any attack spells on beholders, as those spells have no effect on those creatures.

5. Just for fun, cast a Feeblemind spell on a rakshasa. If it works, you will obtain the creature's spell list and see what spells it can cast. But with the Feeblemind spell in effect, the rakshasa can't cast the spells anyway.

David S. Zachary
Shreveport LA

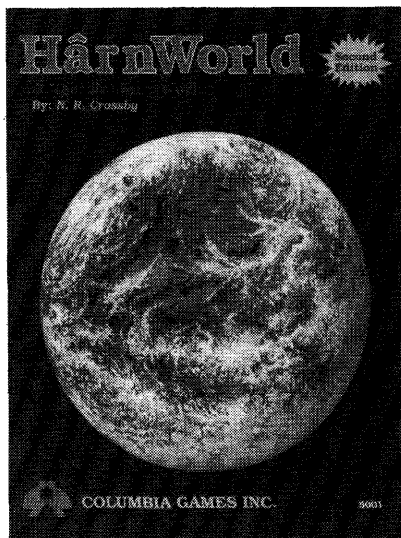
Wizardry V (Sir-Tech)

To enter the motor room, you must buy the Brass Key from good ol' Ironnose, who loiters about in the area past the Vampire Riddle near 25N,20E. And if you think there's something in the pool at 12S,16W, think again!

For those who figured out that they need the blue candle to move past the blue light at 25S,12E, but don't know where the candle is, try this: Get the Jeweled Scepter from the chest you'll find on Level 2. (Remember? You used the Spirit-Away potion at 0N,2E to obtain the chest in the first place!) Then get to the Temple of Kama Kazi at 5N,12E where you'll run into Lord Hienmighty. Whatever you do, do not trade away your Jeweled Scepter. Just kill the dude and use the Jeweled Scepter on the door you'll find in front of you. This will allow you into the Temple; once inside, you'll find that Blue Candle.

Don't forget to mail your hints and tips to: The Lessers, 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583. The adventuring party you save because of your knowledge may save your group someday. Until next month, game on!

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Roleplaying review, DRAGON® Magazine, Oct '89

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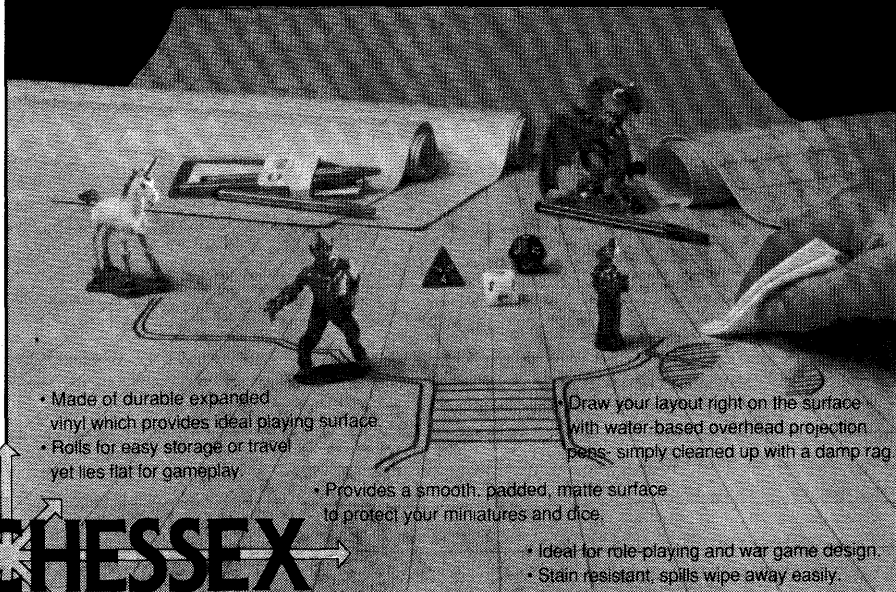


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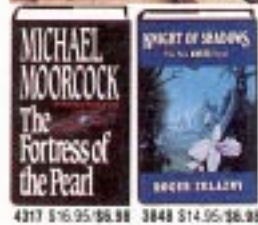
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DRAGON 6/90

EDITORIAL

Mica Antelope

An editorial for parents

It was tragic but inevitable. John, my four-year-old son, acquired a taste for "Tidja Midja Nidja Turtles" from watching their show at his day-care center. Shortly thereafter, he also acquired a taste for a mutant turtle T-shirt, sneakers, night light, breakfast cereal, plastic toys, home videos, and movie (twice). John's favorite character is "Mica Antelope," whom John has decided to emulate in every way, even to briefly adopting the name.

This new interest has a few negative side effects. For one, he won't stop singing the theme song from the show, and he doesn't know many of the words except for the oft-shouted refrain: "Turtlesonna-halfshell! Turtlepower! Turtlepower!" He will sing this with no provocation whatsoever, day and night, but usually when we're in heavy traffic.

Another problem is the language that he has acquired from the show ("Hey, toots! Wanna split a pizza? Cowabunga, dudes!"), which he often uses when company is present.

The only behavior that I had to put a stop to was his habit of making swords out of rolled-up paper and flailing around with them in the kitchen while I was trying to make supper. That was right out. I eventually banned any other sort of martial-arts flailing around in the house because I developed that prehistoric parental fear that he would poke himself in the eye with one of his paper katanas.

Nonetheless, I enjoy watching him play with his turtle toys and other unfamiliar media-spawned delights. He has a healthy and active play life, one shared by many of his friends. "Tidja Midja Nidja Turtles" won't teach him a lot about life, but I don't believe that recreation has to be educational at all; it just has to be fun. And as a parent, I like to encourage the good recreation and weed out the bad. Mica Antelope & company are fine with me.

Some parents are less enthusiastic than I am about the "Turtle Power" phenomenon. I've even seen an article or two in the local paper in which the cartoon's use of violence to solve problems is knocked around, and a woman interviewed on a radio program said she wished there had

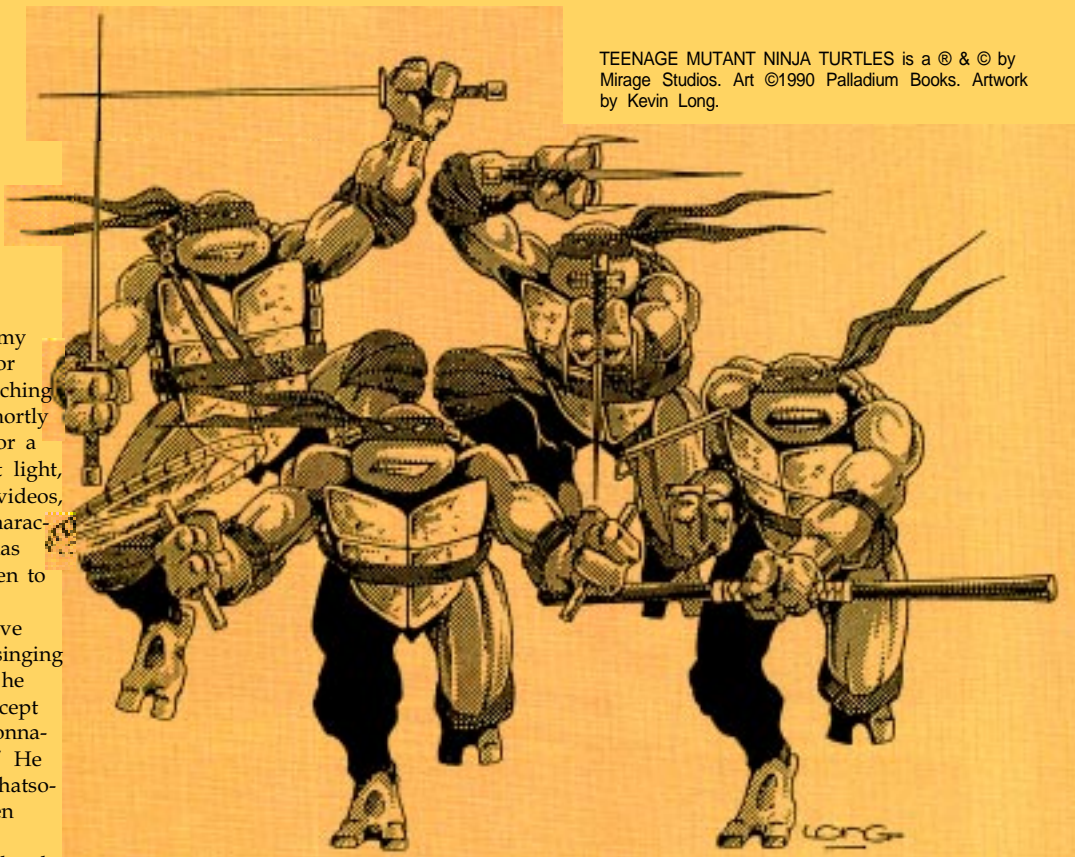
been female turtle characters with which young girls could have identified. A recent letter to a newspaper even criticized the appearance of radioactive sludge on the show (the source of the TMNTs' powers) as glorifying pollution.

Well, I've seen the TMNT videos (I really had little choice), but I can't see that the cartoon violence on them is harmful; any unwanted reaction to it was fixed with a little discipline. As for the second point, I'm less sure and will just withhold judgment. But glorifying pollution? Well, we can't all be on the same wavelength.

But I can see now, firsthand, how daunting it is to a parent to have your children bring home an unfamiliar recreation—like a role-playing game, for example—and have this item take over your kids' brains like a space parasite. Just as the world of "Turtle Power!" is fairly alien to me, the worlds of role-playing must seem equally confusing, if not more so, to many parents. What are "hit dice"? What's a "saving throw"? How much gaming is healthy for my kid? The problem is made all the worse by the media. Is this news report on role-playing games really honest and insightful, or is it some ungodly mixture of hype, rumor, innuendo, and paranoia?

What's a parent to do? The easiest thing to do would be to ban all gaming without

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES is a ® & © by Mirage Studios. Art ©1990 Palladium Books. Artwork by Kevin Long.



addressing the issue further, but this is the lazy parent's way out, and it just spawns rebellion. Why not sit down and look over the game books for a while? I agree that the books can be confusing (some of them confuse me, and I work for a company that makes them), but the time can be instructive. See if your children will explain how the game is played; ask them questions until you get the basic idea of what it's about. (I mean, I watched turtle videos until I would have confessed to any crime that an interrogator would have suggested, and I was satisfied that they were acceptable viewing—not *Jonny Quest*, maybe, but acceptable.)

You might even want to take a big step and ask to listen in on a game that your offspring are playing, which is the best way to learn what they're up to. We've received several letters at DRAGON® Magazine from readers who actually encouraged their parents to sit in on their role-playing sessions, and they report great success in easing their parents' fears about role-playing itself. In fact, some parents *even joined the group*.

We do receive letters now and then from parents who role-play with their children. I played in an AD&D® game in West Germany with a group that included one whole family, and met another family that

role-played together just after arriving in Wisconsin to work for TSR, Inc. The latter family was that of Margaret Weis, one of the original linchpins of TSR's highly popular DRAGONLANCE® saga.

It is heartening to see some of the letters from parents who support their children's interest in role-playing. The father of one young author for DRAGON Magazine told me that publication of his son's work was a major family event. Alan D. Long, a parent in Aurora, Ill., wrote to us concerning the need "to point out the good things about [D&D® game]. . . . It is a good game system, a good family game; it's a vehicle to spend much time with our children, to teach them decision making, problem solving, and courageous behavior." Mr. Long, who noted that he was an active worker in the Christian church as well as a Cub Scout leader, went so far as to defend the D&D game from remarks made in *The Beacon-News*, a newspaper that ran an article expressing some anti-D&D game opinions. And Judy Dietz, a mother of two from Hawaii, said: "I don't particularly like the [AD&D] game myself, but my sons do—so I don't forbid them to play or buy the books, games, or manuals."

Maybe what the role-playing industry needs is what Konami, Inc., a computer-game company, has done. Konami has started Konami Mom, a program in which family issues related to computer gaming are addressed. "So many parents are afraid of computers and other high-tech equipment, it's easy to feel out-of-sync with our kids," says Konami Mom Charlyne Robinson, a Chicago parent and educational psychologist. "This [the Konami Mom program] gives us the opportunity to get up to speed with our kids and relate on their level." A press release from Konami reveals that the Robinson family plays a lot of computer games together. So, in fact, do the Lessers of San Ramon,

Calif.—the people who have been writing "The Role of Computers" column for this magazine.

My son John is too young to be involved in role-playing games, but it's very possible that one of these days he will badger me to bring home a copy of one of TSR's role-playing rules so that he and his friends can start a campaign. And after a few marathon sessions of whining and griping (on my part), I'll do it. I've played role-playing games for over a decade and have worked at TSR, Inc. for seven years now; I think I can tell if TSR's games are good or bad for kids. And I think that they are good enough for my kid.

First, of course, we have to make it through the "Turtle Power" phase, and John has shown an uncomfortable interest in getting a "Tendo" (Nintendo) computer game for his birthday since he was three. Thank God he still likes his Dino Riders. Having loved dinosaurs since I was his age, I can still relate to *those*.

Roger E. Moore

Note: Konami, Inc. offers a free pamphlet called, "Answers to Parents' Most Commonly Asked Questions About Video-games," which has a great amount of information that is applicable to many other entertainments like role-playing games. For your copy, write to: Konami Mom, c/o Konami, Inc., 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove IL 60089, U.S.A. Also ask for any press releases on the Konami Mom program. It's worth it!

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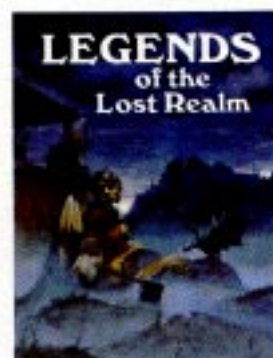
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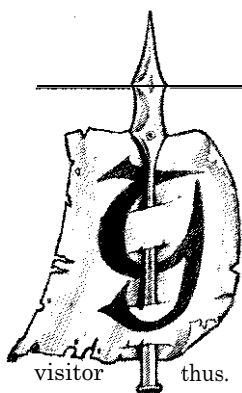


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visitor thus. More so with visitors such as these who were obviously not interested in good fellowship and ale.

The riders drew to a halt, destroying much of the yard he had worked so hard to cultivate. One horse sidestepped into the flower bed, trampling the flowers Aelfraeda had planted years ago. The rider forced the horse back to the yard, doing more damage than if he'd held his ground. Once they were stopped, the nearest just short of trampling Gerek where he stood, there was an eerie silence soon broken by the lead rider. His voice was powerful, stern, and direct. Even the horses stood fast while his breath smoked in the morning mist.

"If Gerek ap Aodhan be your name, then I have business with you in the name of Owein Skaga, Lord of Caer Glas."

Gerek braced himself, knowing full well the type of man he baited. "I speak with no man through helm, nor with whom I know not."

The mounted warrior's hand went immediately to the long sword at his side; habit, that much Gerek could tell. This was not a man accustomed to being greeted with belligerence. For but a moment mail gauntlet rested on hilt, then he seemed to retreat somewhat in the saddle. The hand left the sword and went to the visor.

The faceplate lifted with no sound at all. A man who cared for his armor, or one who could afford new when he chose, or one whose armor had never seen the outdoors. Gerek ruled out all save the first when he saw the steel-gray eyes of his visitor. This was a man of war. Moreover, this was a man who had *seen* war. And perhaps something else as well; there was a weariness back of those gray orbs that went beyond mere bloodshed on the battlefield.

"I am Rhys, Commander of Lord Owein's armies. I've been sent from Caer Glas to find ap Aodhan, the one they call the Dragonslayer."

"If it's the slaying of dragons you're after, then you've come to the wrong place."

Leather creaked and the warhorse snorted as Rhys swung down from the saddle. "Are you, or are you not, Gerek ap Aodhan?"

"I am he."

Riders shifted in the yard, nigh twenty men flanking left and right as if they thought he would attempt something. Gerek was both amused and annoyed to learn that his reputation was animate even after an eight-year lapse. Rhys reached up with both hands and completely removed his helm. Bracing it under his right arm, he crossed the short distance separating them and offered his left hand in greeting.

The left hand, leaving the right free to draw sword or long knife. These thoughts passed through Gerek's mind like recollections of old friends. Gerek chose to ignore the offered hand, both to bait the man and because a handshake through the mail gauntlet irritated him as much as talking through the helm. Rhys withdrew his hand and retreated a step. *Sword's reach*, Gerek thought to himself.

Ivory in the Blood

by Brian A. Hopkins

Illustrations by Paul Jaquays

"It would appear that legends leave out details such as rudeness," Rhys remarked sourly.

"You've not come for my hospitality," Gerek fired back. "You bring men of war. Men who have obviously failed at something you hope I will succeed at."

Rhys frowned. "Direct then?"

"No other way."

"We have a problem at Caer Glas—"

"Obviously."

"—for which we require your unique talents."

"Have the peasants finally risen against your tyrannical lord?" Though Gerek had never met Lord Owein, he had ample experience in dealing with feudal lords. There were exceptions to the rule, but most were pompous and unjust, supported by the peasants unlucky enough to fall within their domain.

There was a shuffling of weapons and several curses from the warriors in their semi-circle of steel. Tyrant or not, they were loyal to this man Owein. Perhaps Gerek's arrow had flown off target with that remark.

Rhys surprised him completely by laughing. "You don't leave many outs for yourself, do you, Dragonslayer? Once you've done with insulting us and our lord, we'll be ready to kill you if you refuse to help. As it stood before, you might have had some chance of refusing us and keeping your head on your shoulders."

Gerek swallowed that and realized eight years of peaceful solitude had yielded an appreciation for life. "Ask, then."

"No," Rhys responded. "Lord Owein requests your presence. Whatever aid is asked of you, he will ask it. Get what you need."

Gerek shrugged. "I need only the clothes on my back."

"I think not, Dragonslayer."

"What then?"

"Whatever weapons and armor you'll need."

Though he knew, and had known since the sound of their approach had echoed up through the canyons, Gerek asked anyway. "What weapons?"

Rhys smiled. "Why, whatever weapons you use to slay a dragon."

It loomed dark in the distance, a towering, malignant structure. Gray Castle. Caer Glas in the Celtic tongue. It was visible for an hour before they actually reached its gates of black iron.

"Don't see how a dragon could bother you much in there," Gerek remarked to his companions.

"It's not us it's bothering," Rhys answered. "It's the peasants."

Score another one for this Lord Owein, Gerek thought to himself. *He cares about his serfs. Aelfraeda, my love, how have I become so cynical over the years?* Of course there was no answer; she'd been dead nearly two years now. Sometimes he still caught himself talking to her.

Behind him, the wagon creaked as it hauled his weapons and armor. Rhys had insisted that the gear be hauled in a wagon they had brought and left waiting below the ascent to Gerek's cottage. Armor, sword, and lance had all been retrieved from their resting place beneath the floor of the house. Rhys' men had been adamant that Gerek not have the opportunity to touch anything. Despite their curiosity, Rhys had seen to it that none of his own men

had opened the oilskin-wrapped items.

At the castle, Rhys was hailed from above and, once he was identified, the gates swung open and an iron portcullis was hauled up. Gerek remarked on the castle's defenses.

"There was a time when we saw many wars in these valleys, Dragonslayer. There's been peace for the last five years, but we don't lessen our vigilance." Gerek made no comment and Rhys continued. "Caer Glas has withstood four different sieges since it was built."

"And one dragon has you at a loss?"

"It's hard to light something that moves only at night and lives beneath the ground."

"Then you know of its lair?"

Rhys drew his horse to a halt in a courtyard, ignoring the question. Stablemen rushed forward to take both their horses. Gerek noticed the soldiers took care of their own mounts. He awarded them some small measure of respect for that.

Dismounting, Gerek patted the horse's neck. It was a good strong warhorse; no Riagan, but a good horse all the same. He longed for the companionship of his old friend nearly as much as he longed for Aelfraeda. However, Riagan wouldn't be needed this time since Rhys obviously knew of the dragon's lair. This would be no mounted charge in the open. It would be your typical cave encounter: Go down, find dragon, irritate it enough to get it to charge, brace lance, and let it do the rest, while you hoped and prayed your armor withstood the heat. Later, burnt and blistered, he'd take the head up for the people.

It took a minute before Gerek realized he was suddenly thinking in terms of actually fighting this dragon. Why was he doing this? Years ago, he'd laid his weapons beneath the floorboards of his cottage and retired. *Keep your wits about you, old son*, he told himself. *You're too old and much too soft for this kind of work.*

"This way," Rhys interrupted Gerek's thoughts.

Gerek followed him through an archway, across a smaller courtyard, and from there up a series of stone steps leading to Lord Owein's audience chamber. Owein had evidently been told of their arrival, for he was waiting. He rose and extended his hand to Gerek. Gerek surprised himself by taking it. Owein was a strong, amicable-looking fellow, not at all the tyrant Gerek had envisioned Caer Glas would produce.

Gerek decided it was time to make amends. "M'lord Skaga, I am Gerek ap Aodhan. How may I be of service?"

"Please sit over here and I'll have wine brought in. You must be thirsty after the ride." Owein led him to a large table to one side, away from the formal audience area. "Rhys, send the wine in on your way out."

Rhys frowned at the dismissal but left all the same. Gerek and Lord Owein seated themselves at the table. "A loyal man, Rhys Breandan, but he has failed to deliver in this matter. Oh, not for want of trying, mind you; I have no complaints."

The wine was brought in by an older woman dressed in simple but sturdy clothing. She poured for them both, serving Gerek first. He waited until she had left before repeating his question to Owein. "M'lord, I was brought here under some duress. I must insist that you explain."

Owein took one long drink of his wine, leaned back in his chair and began. "Three months ago there was a tremor in the foothills east of here. That tremor unearthed

something. Perhaps it had been waiting there for many years, or perhaps the avalanches that followed the quake simply awoke it. I've heard tales about them hibernating for centuries." He looked Gerek dead in the eyes. "We are speaking, of course, of a dragon."

"Eight years ago," Gerek replied, "I scoured the land in search of dragons. Your own father was one of the half dozen or so men who funded the search. I found nothing. At the time we were convinced there were no dragons left."

"And you retired, the last of the dragonslayers."

"By that time, the only dragonslayer who had lived to retirement."

"The evening following the quake, several farmers reported missing cattle. We assumed it to be thieves. The thefts went on. A week later, a young peasant woman disappeared. Days later, a shepherd and half his flock vanished. It continued, with Rhys and his men investigating every step of the way. In time they laid traps and eventually one paid off; it came."

Gerek saw it in his mind, not Rhys and his men specifically, but others who had set traps for something they didn't understand. They staked out cattle or sheep, with the men trying to remain hidden, but oh so visible to an airborne beast with hawk-like vision. They would be bored, for this would not be the first night they had watched the trap. Nor would it be the first night the dragon had watched them. It would know the trap on first sight and it would wait, knowing the nature of man from eons of watching him evolve. In the dark mist of early morning, the dragon would strike from the air, killing those who didn't flee quickly enough. Sure, they would fight, but with weapons they used on other men: crossbows with quarrels that would bounce from reptilian scales, and swords whose edges were meant to turn other blades. Better to fight it with a skinning knife that would at least scratch the hide than bludgeon it with a blade meant to pound armor. The dragon would feed that night on human flesh, ignoring the tethered bait. How many times had he heard such tales? Had his fee ever been exorbitant enough that they need try it on their own?

Owein seemed to sense that Gerek knew what had happened and didn't go into the details of their failure with the trap. "Less than half escaped that night. Rhys' own brother was among those slaughtered. For him, it's been a personal battle ever since. A vendetta that has paid off, for Rhys followed it back to its lair."

"Forgive me if I seem skeptical, Lord Owein, but that is not an easy thing to do. No horse I've ever seen can keep up with a dragon in flight."

"This dragon doesn't fly. It is old, so old that the wings have atrophied. I've never seen anything so huge—yes, I was there that night and I saw it. Nor would I have ever thought something that big could move so fast."

"They will surprise you," Gerek patronized.

"No, I've seen others. I even saw you slay one about sixteen years ago. You hunted it for Lord Daren of Cornwall. I was among those who watched from a distance when you ran it down. The Dragon of Cornwall could have sat with ease upon our dragon's knee."

Gerek wanted to laugh, but couldn't. "Surely you jest, m'lord. I recall the encounter, unique in the fact the dragon chose to fight in daylight, thus providing theater for hundreds, yourself among them. But that was a ma-

ture dragon. Hell, the beast was so big and brown he would have been mistaken for a fair-sized hill had he gone to ground somewhere. That was no small green I slew in Cornwall that day."

Owein swallowed the last of his wine. "I know. Cornwall's dragon must have gone—what, three rods? Our dragon is nearly twice that long."

Gerek said nothing, setting his empty goblet aside. Owein continued. "Rhys and thirty men tracked it to its lair. Rhys and twenty of them went down after it. Hours later Rhys came out, dragging two wounded. The rest perished. It was then we sought you."

"I can tell you what I know of slaying such beasts, Lord Owein."

Owein seemed not to hear him. "I want you to kill it. We have checked; you are the last man alive who knows their weaknesses. You are the last with the skill to meet it and succeed."

"M'lord, for more than eight years the battles I have fought have been in my garden. I am an old man. Dozens of old wounds prevent me from moving freely before midday. I cannot go in there after your dragon."

"Then we are lost. We have encountered the last dragon, but there is no last dragonslayer after all." Owein half rose from his seat. "Must I show you what's left of those who've fallen to this nightmare? Is it the money? Name your price, man! I'll pay anything for the safety of my hold and my people!"

Gerek ran his finger idly around the rim of his empty wine goblet. His mind drifted again and he saw other meetings, meetings where fees had been discussed long before anyone cared where the dragon was or what the dragon had done. Meetings where princes and barons seeking adventure had hired him to simply hunt down a dragon. Never mind whether the dragon had ever done anything. It was game, like a deer or fox, and Gerek had served as huntsman more often than he cared to recall.

But here was a man struggling to protect his people. Here was a dragon rumored to be nearly twice the size of any Gerek had ever encountered. Here was a dragon that had gone from slaughtering cattle and sheep for food to killing peasants.

Here was the last dragon.

And here was the last man alive who had ever slain one.

The wagon creaked to a halt, and Rhys pointed up to a crumbled ridge. "There," he said. "Look to the right of that fallen spire. See it?"

Gerek forced back an involuntary shudder. Dragons like the entrances to their lairs to be tight fitting. He'd seen dozens of them that had piled rocks around the entrances until they could just barely squeeze through. He hypothesized that they did this to make their lairs easier to defend. If this one followed suit, then it was one hell of a big dragon, easily twice the size of the Dragon of Cornwall, as Owein had said.

"I see it."

Rhys jumped down from the wagon. "Let's get started."

Gerek looked back at him and frowned. "One thing needs to be made clear now or I stay in this wagon. I'm going in there after that ugly brown bastard. Alone."

Without answering, Rhys dropped the tailgate on the wagon.

"Do we have an understanding?"

"Yes," Rhys mumbled. "But one thing you should know. He's gold, not brown."

Gerek swallowed that with everything else he'd heard about this extraordinary last dragon. Everyone knew young dragons were green. What they looked like at birth was anyone's guess since no one had ever managed to track down a lair with young. It was assumed from studies made on the reproductive organs of dead dragons that they were egg layers. Gerek had always dreamed of finding a cache of dragon eggs. It had never happened. As the dragon matures, the green eventually darkens and becomes a rusty brown. The brown eventually reaches the color of rich mud in the mature dragons of about three to four rods in length. Or at least in what Gerek had always assumed was a mature dragon. Perhaps with age, the brown faded to gold. Perhaps adolescent dragons were all mankind had encountered. Until now.

The dragonslayer swung down and joined Rhys at the rear of the wagon. Rhys handed him the longest of the oilskin-wrapped packages which had been hauled from Gerek's home in the mountains. Gerek unwrapped it.

The lance was longer than any Rhys had ever seen before, measuring a half rod or more. The package had been deceptive, since the lance was wrapped as two pieces, shaft and blade. The blade itself was eight hands long. Rhys watched as Gerek mounted the head over the shaft and then inserted pins to hold it in place. The pins took some hammering, for which they used Rhys' dagger. When the lance was assembled, Gerek extended it to Rhys and the Caer Glas warlord took it in reverent hands.

"Not the sort of weapon one would carry into battle," Rhys commented as he felt the slender blade. "Any heavy weapon would shatter this blade. Why is it so thin?"

"Feel the edge."

Rhys ran his finger carefully over the edge and yelped. "Sharper than anything I've ever seen before. Can't even touch it without cutting myself."

"A dragon's hide is scales, tougher than your own armor. This blade is razor sharp and thin enough to slide through those scales and find its heart. You get one chance, one thrust. If the blade turns, or shatters, or misses its heart, you're a dead man. With one claw, it'll crush you like a bug, or those mighty jaws will lock around your body and bite you in half. Or, if it's feeling particularly playful, it might just roast you alive. Most dragonslayers died because they missed with the lance."

"This is long enough to reach its heart?" Rhys asked, indicating the eight-hand blade.

Gerek frowned. "It's long enough to kill any normal size dragon. As for our overgrown friend in there . . ."

Next, the dragonslayer unwrapped his sword and withdrew it from its plain leather sheath. Like the lance, it was different from anything Rhys had ever seen. The blade was wider than that of even the stoutest broadsword. Very thick and heavy in the center, the blade then tapered down to the thinnest, sharpest edge imaginable. Gerek slid it back into the sheath. "Your own weapon would shatter the edges of this blade if I were to attack you with it. It was ridiculous of you to keep me from them when we left my home."

"I had no way of knowing."

"No matter. I like a man who takes every precaution when confronting the unknown." Gerek handed the sword

to Rhys. "Careful if you unsheath it. That blade is made for cutting a dragon's neck."

Gerek continued to unwrap the rest of the packages. They proved to be armor not much different from Rhys' own, albeit heavier by about 40 pounds. There were other subtle differences: like the double visor, the inside one slotted for vision while the outer was solid to protect the eyes. Or the hooks on the inside of the greaves, which Gerek explained were used to cling to a dragon in battle. As he suited up, the dragonslayer explained other differences to Rhys Breandan. Rhys didn't realize it, but what he was watching, no one would ever see again.

Armored, Gerek ap Aodhan belted the sword about his waist. Though he was a tall man, the tip of the blade nearly reached the ground. He took the lance from Rhys, collected a torch from a pile of them in the wagon, and looked up the hill. "Do not follow me in, Breandan, no matter what you hear. Understand?"

Rhys nodded. With the hilt of his dagger, he struck a spark from a piece of flint, lighting Gerek's torch.

"If I don't come out, either we have slain each other or it has won. Probably the latter. Your best bet then is to try and seal the cave." With that, Gerek ap Aodhan turned and began the short ascent to the entrance of the dragon's lair.

He remembered the first time he had stood thus before a dark cavern's entrance. He had been nine years old and with Aodhan, his father.

"Son, what I do now, I do for the sake of those townsfolk back there. Never think there is any glory in this profession. I don't do it for fame; and, as you well know, I only charge enough that you and your mother may live comfortably. There's an evil on this Earth, son, and we've been given the power to remove it." The tall Celt had looked down at the youth that just barely topped his waistline. "I know you don't understand, son. But that creature down there is one of the devil's minions. It's my duty to destroy it."

Aodhan had emerged from that lair, dragging behind him the severed head of a rather small brown dragon. He'd rolled it down the hill to the waiting townsmen, who'd stared at it in terror as if it still had some power over them. Then their stares had gone from terror to awe as they looked up the hill to their deliverer.

Gerek tried to recall how many times he had stood before the entrance to a dragon's lair since that first time. He couldn't. This time was only marginally different. The dragonlance was clutched in his left fist and the dragonsword hung at his side. The differences? There was no Riagan waiting below to carry him home. And there was no Aelfraeda to dress his wounds when he got there.

Both visors were up, and he felt the wind on his face. He smelled flowers nearby. What was it that his father had once told him?

"Son, every time I go down into one of those holes, I think what a fine day it is to die."

He had never been sure what his father meant by that until the first time he had gone down alone. Before he went down he had stood, tasting the windborne smells of life, and understanding had come in a rush. It was indeed a good day to pass from this world to the next.

Lance and sputtering torch held out before him, Gerek ap Aodhan entered the lair of the last dragon. There had

been times when he had to take the lance down in parts, but not this time. There was plenty of room, even for the lance. This was an immense opening.

The damp dark of the lair enveloped him.

The great head rises from its resting place on the stone floor. Golden eyelids go up, revealing emerald orbs. The dragon's eyes scintillate in the glow from the cavern's natural skylight. The tail thrashes in irritation, then is abruptly still. Nostrils flare, emanating wisps of sulfurous smoke that curl languidly in the still cave air.

He has come.

Though it has felt fear before, the dragon feels none now. This is destiny. The dragon has been awaiting this moment for a decade.

Minutes later, the dragon can hear him as well as smell him. For a human, he moves with incredible stealth; yet he is only a man, and an armored one at that.

A long forked tongue lashes out, and a few drops of liquid flame bespatter the nearby rock. The dragon rises on silent feet and turns to face the cavern's southern entrance. Here the cavern meets a natural tunnel. The walls are covered with dried blood, and the cave is littered with the dented metal remains of those who came hunting before.

This man is different.

He is not the first. Others of his calling have met this dragon on a variety of battlegrounds. All those are dead. This man is the last. Fate has brought them together at this point in time. A predestination set in motion when first their races met and exchanged blows.

The final confrontation has come.

Warm air rose to meet him. After a few moments of descent, he lowered the first of the helm's visors. The air was moist. Perhaps a natural spring lay somewhere deep beneath the surface, kept warm by that which swam in it.

It waited.

Somehow he knew it was aware of him, even when he was sure the sounds of his approach had not yet reached it. There was a sensation within him that he had never felt before. As he was sure the dragon was aware of him, he was just as aware of it.

The dark tunnel twisted and weaved, yet he had no trouble navigating it in the dark. He felt as if he could easily toss aside the torch. It was as if he had passed this way before.

With a shudder, he realized it was somehow calling him. The dragon, not he, had passed this way many times, knew every turn in the 'dim passageway. But was it guiding him, or was he somehow one with the beast that waited?

There was a sound from below, something reptilian sliding across rock and the click of claws. It had turned to face him.

How did he know this?

A gust of hot air against his face and he knew it wasn't far away. A few more turns and he would meet the maw from which that foul breath issued. His foot rocked something metal, and he looked down to find a battered breastplate. Beneath it lay a halberd, the shaft broken. The halberd was unbloodied; the same could not be said of the breastplate.

The next turn in the passageway brought him to what was a small alcove to the lair and the scene of a massacre. Strewn about the cavern were the battered remains of

armor and the blackened bones of a score of warriors.

Now visible was the last turn. Around that, he knew, the dragon lay in wait. He could feel its breath wafting around the bend. The walls ahead reflected lambent fire that did not originate from his torch. He knew it was laughing.

Laughing? Why?

Gerek dropped the torch and gripped the lance firmly in both hands: Did the dragon know something about this predestined encounter that he did not? For a moment he had the strangest feeling that he had been here before. This was a cavern he had walked more than once, maybe not in this life, but in a myriad of others. He had turned that corner before and it had always been the same.

He would turn the corner . . .

Move forward, just place one foot ahead of the other.

. . . with the lance extended and ready . . .

One hand ready to drop the second visor to shield his eyes if need be.

. . . coming face to face with the dragon, golden nostrils flaring and emerald eyes penetrating to the core of him and. . .

Turn the corner.

. . . the dragon would say:

"And so, he has arrived."

Gerek braced the butt of the lance. The sense of déjà vu had left him and he was now in his element. **Charge**, he bid the golden monstrosity before him. But the dragon rested casually, tail curled around and over its forelegs, content to see what the intruder would do. This was unlike any lair encounter he had experienced before. Typically, dragons attack upon invasion of their domain. It was this characteristic which all dragonslayers used to their advantage: the charge, the braced lance, the impaled dragon, and then the hacking with the sword.

This dragon followed none of the norms. And what's more, it had talked to him!

"Welcome, Gerek ap Aodhan."

He lowered the lance and raised the helm's visor. "You know my name," he stammered.

"The last dragonslayer. How could I, the last dragon, not know of you?"

"You knew I was coming."

"Before you did, human," the dragon replied.

"And you know why I've come?"

"Better than you do, human."

Gerek ignored the cryptic answers and chose instead to examine both the dragon and the cavern in which it rested. Both were huge, but there the similarities stopped. The cavern was dark, black igneous rock born of fire. The dragon was gold, aureate brilliance born of sunlight.

The worm was indeed bigger than any he had ever seen, easily measuring the six rods attested to by Lord Owein. As Owein had said, its wings were atrophied. If this dragon could fly at all, it would be for short distances only. The head was a broad triangle, horns of silver, eyes of emerald, and fangs of ivory that dripped a liquid conflagration. The dragon's pupils were pools of tenebrous gloom. Its claws were penumbrous ebony, worn little by the rocky cavern floor.

The cavern itself had two points of access: the tunnel at Gerek's back and another, similar opening that lay beyond the dragon. Roughly circular, the cavern measured approximately 20 rods in diameter. Room for several more

dragons—even ones *this* size. Gerek, however, had his hands full with just one.

He realized he'd been gawking for several minutes while the dragon waited patiently. Where was the demon he had come to slay? Where the beast his father had raised him to fear and hate? "I . . . don't understand," was all he found to say.

"You've come to slay me," the dragon responded bluntly. "What don't you understand about it?"

Sweat trickled down his back. It was hot in the lair, and the armor was becoming damn uncomfortable. He decided to be more assertive and took a firm grip on the lance.

"You've overstepped your bounds, worm! Cattle and sheep are one thing, but the peasants are something else."

"Ah, the farmer's daughter that disappeared."

"And the young shepherd—"

"Who can tell you more about her whereabouts than I'll ever be able to."

"What do you mean?"

The dragon sighed, causing Gerek to jump as flames gouted forth. They splashed harmlessly to his left, though, and he was somewhat embarrassed for his reaction. Lance lowered again, he listened to the dragon's answer.

"Why was it so easy to steal sheep from that young shepherd?" The dragon did its best impression of a human's grin. The attempt, however, was wasted on Gerek. "Because he was busy sneaking off from his flock every night to see the farmer's daughter. The two of them got tired of bedding in the farmer's barn and finally ran off together. Hence their disappearance."

Gerek surprised himself. "Why do I believe you?"

More flame, this time a laugh which even Gerek recognized. "Perhaps before this night is through, you can answer that question yourself."

The dragonslayer looked down at his lance and frowned. *What am I doing here?* He moved to the cavern wall and leaned the lance there, the dragon following his every move. Sweat ran into Gerek's eyes and he again cursed the armor.

"Take it off," prompted the dragon.

"That'd certainly make it easy," he replied sarcastically.

Again the strange sound of a dragon's laughter. "If I wanted you dead, ap Aodhan, dead you'd be."

That sunk in. This beast was nearly twice the size of the largest dragon Gerek had ever killed, the Dragon of Branwyne. The lance hadn't been long enough to reach that dragon's heart. How could he expect it to reach this one's? There was the dragonsword at his side, but it had barely triumphed over Branwyne's dragon.

Time to decide, he told himself. *Do I hurl myself at this dragon and try to take him with me to hell? Or do I see where all this is leading?*

What would Father have done?

And then, fast on the heels of that last thought: *Father's long dead.*

He removed the helmet, eyes on the dragon at all times. This laid aside, he unbuckled the belt holding the sword about his waist. The sword he unsheathed, pleased as something he judged as nervousness passed through those emerald eyes before he leaned it beside the lance. He sat down then and began the job of removing 120 pounds of armor alone. The dragon laid its head across its forelegs and seemed content to watch for a moment, then abruptly

it asked, "How many of my kind have you slain?"

Gerek looked up from the greave he was unbuckling. Why the hell was he removing his armor in front of this monstrosity? "Thirty-seven. The last more than eight years ago in the hills of Northaven." Why did it feel like a confession?

"And your father before you?"

"Some say he slew over a hundred dragons in his lifetime. I think the actual figure was around seventy. He never would say." Then, accusingly: "A dragon friend of yours ripped him limb from limb when I was only fifteen." Both greaves off, Gerek laid them aside and started on the buckles above his knees.

"There were more of us in those days," the dragon reminisced. "You humans breed like vermin. A dragon takes hundreds of years before he reaches maturity and seeks out a mate. Time was on your side, human."

"We had to protect ourselves," Gerek countered.

"And we had to eat," was the quick reply.

"It didn't have to start as it did. Somewhere, hundreds of years ago, when man and dragon met for the first time, the dragon could have spoken up."

"Was he given the chance?"

"But thirty-seven times I've confronted one of you and not once did a dragon say 'I think there's been some mistake.'"

"Maybe there was no mistake," the dragon said.

"Maybe our two races were destined to war, mine to lose, and the two of us to meet here, where I guard a treasure beyond belief."

Gerek's eyes darted to the opening behind the dragon. Treasure? It was a myth, a peasant's daydream. Never had he found anything of value in a dragon's lair.

The look did not escape the dragon. "In due time, human."

Armor set aside, Gerek sat back against the cavern wall, both more and less at ease without the 120 pounds of steel weighing on his body. If the dragon made its move now, he was a dead man. But had he ever been otherwise? For whatever good it would do him, his sword was within reach, as was the now-useless lance.

"You leave today with no weapons, Gerek ap Aodhan," the dragon hissed, reading either his mind or his intentions. "You walk out of here more than a warrior today. More than the slayer of dragons that you were."

"Explain."

Flames of irritation. "When—no, if—you leave these caverns, you leave without that armor, without those weapons, without my head."

"All this in exchange for . . . ?"

"The treasure behind me."

Gerek rose to his feet. "Seems I should take a look at this treasure."

The dragon also rose, more movement than Gerek had yet seen from the beast. It didn't move to block his path to the lair's second exit; rather, it seemed to be moving to a vantage point from which it could watch Gerek enter the treasure room.

Gerek realized as he approached the dark entrance that he was now out of reach of his weapons. Small concern, however, since the dragon's movement had effectively cut him off.

He was forced to duck to enter the dark antechamber. As he crossed the threshold, the dragon extended one forelimb and rested a claw the size of Gerek's forearm on his shoulder. "Harm her and you'll not die a quick death, ap Aodhan. That I promise you."

He entered. It was a small cave, lit only with light from the larger chamber reflected by the golden dragon. Shadows concealed everything and he was about to turn about when the dragon moved and with it moved the reflected light. A shaft of that golden light fell across the floor and there she lay, purest white on a cloth of velvet black.

"She's real?" Gerek managed to get out.

At the sound of his voice, she raised her head, dispelling all doubts. Dark eyes met his and he read some small measure of fear there. He showed her empty hands, glad to be rid of both weapons and armor for this meeting. "Does she have a name?" he asked, eyes locked with hers.

"She hasn't said," the dragon answered from behind him.

"She's beautiful."

"Magic. Stuff of legends, like myself. The three of us are the last of our kinds. You, the warrior of old, born of honor and courage. Life wagered time and time again for the peace and quiet of farm folk and overfed lords. I, last of a race born ten thousand years before man. Destined in the end to perish at their hands because we are not as prolific. And she, last of a race nearly as old as my own. Cursed by human mythology to be something she's not and to die for it. The last—"

"Unicorn." Gerek scarcely breathed the word, mind still refusing to accept what his eyes saw. They had been legend all his life. He had never believed they existed. Until now.

The foal got to her feet. Coat of purest white, matching hooves, mane and tail the same, long and full, looking just brushed a thousand strokes. Eyes that echoed impenetrable depths, matching black nose testing the air, and a horn that should not, by all the laws of nature, be there. This was the treasure that confronted him. She was so small, couldn't be more than a few weeks old.

"Where did you—"

"A story that'll never be told, ap Aodhan. Suffice to say she was entrusted to me. She is the last."

"What will you do with her?"

"Give her to you."

He turned then, full about to confront the golden face that peered in at him and the unicorn. "Give her to me?"

"That's what I said."

"In exchange for armor, weapons, and your life?"

The dragon laughed, some of the resulting flames coming dangerously close to Gerek's feet. He did not, however, back up for fear of startling the fragile creature behind him.

"I'm changing your life, human. Take this frail creature and do what I cannot. Raise her. Perhaps in years ahead, you'll find a way to curtail her species' extinction. For all I know, she'll breed true with your own horses." The dragon paused. "My life, however, was never part of the bargain. Mine will continue to its own predestined end. Yours, on the other hand, will change. That change precludes the need for those items you've left in my lair."

Gerek turned back to face the spindly legged apparition on the velvet spread. He extended a hand and she first

sniffed carefully, then nuzzled it. Her muzzle was soft and new; it brought unwelcome memories of himself as a child and Riagan, this size, given as a present from his father.

"I'm offering you a chance, ap Aodhan, to right some of the wrongs you have done in your life. Help this creature. Show me that your race is more than butchers."

He knelt, and the unicorn moved against him. Seconds later she melted into his arms.

"You'll take her?"

In answer, he enfolded the unicorn in his arms and got back to his feet. "What will you do?" he asked. "Caer Glas is bound to hunt you and—"

A warrior's scream of attack, the dragon turning on claws that tore loose hunks of solid rock, the foal squirming loose to run for the shadows of her small alcove, and the bright flicker of flame in the lair, all seemingly at once. Gerek whirled about so fast he turned an ankle on loose rock and went sprawling. As he scrambled to his feet, he heard the voice of Rhys Breandan and the roar of the dragon as one.

"Die, worm from hell!"

Rhys had the dragonlance clutched in his hands. Nearby, a discarded torch sputtered hungrily on the rocky ground. He dived at the dragon, not knowing the technique was to set the lance and let the dragon come to you. His aim was true, and the lance met the dragon behind the left shoulder blade where one might hope to reach its heart. However, Breandan hadn't counted on the aureate scales of gold. Tougher than any armor, they turned the blow. Rhys, with eighty pounds of armor, crashed into the side of the dragon amidst the flying shards of both blade and shaft.

The dragon whirled, and one great foreclaw swept the Caer Glas warrior aside. Rhys flew across the cavern and slammed against solid granite. He hung there against the wall for a second, one gauntlet dropping to clatter to the ground along with several small clasps that had torn free of his armor; then he sprawled forward and was still.

Gerek reached the dragon's side, limping on the turned ankle. Dragon blood ran to form a pool at his feet. The lance had penetrated before it shattered. From the amount of broken blade on the ground, Gerek estimated half its length must be in the dragon's side. The dragon turned to look at him, and there was fire in those emerald eyes.

A moan from across the room and Rhys was on his feet. As Rhys drew his broadsword, Gerek saw blood running from mouth, nostrils, and both ears. His helm was dented as if it had been hit with a poleaxe. His visor hung to one side, twisted. Drawing back the broadsword, he lunged at the dragon.

"No!" Gerek screamed, but it was too late. Rhys was in motion and the dragon's mouth gaped, flames smoldering hotter than any hell. With no choice, Gerek also moved, rolling under the dragon's belly to reach the dragonsword.

Rhys struck. The blow caught the dragon squarely across the snout. Sparks and blood flew. The dragon roared and Rhys was enveloped in flame. The force of the blast lifted the warrior and hurled him back a full rod, where he somehow landed on his feet. His screams, as fire consumed those areas not covered by armor, jarred loose stalagmites that had hung for thousands of years.

Even as the flames erupted from the dragon's mouth, Gerek struck. The dragonsword bit with a solid thunk into

the beast's neck and held there. The dragon spun about, snapping the blade, and slamming its head full into Gerek. He saw the shattered sword hilt spinning away just before he struck the cavern wall.

Everything went black.

Sometime later—hours or days he couldn't have said—he felt something nuzzling against his side and he came around. He opened his eyes to gaze into those of the unicorn. The side of her white muzzle was streaked with red blood. *Shattered* innocence, Gerek thought to himself.

He rolled to a sitting position, crying out as broken ribs grated together. His head spun, and for a moment he almost went back under; then the cavern quit spinning and he was able to stay up by leaning on the foal. Vision cleared, he looked upon the carnage.

The mess against the far wall had been Rhys Breandan. A few flames still licked hungrily at the remains. Nearer lay the dragon. Its head was stretched full upon the cave floor, the emerald eyes watching him intently. From the wound in its neck pumped a river of blood. Gerek discovered he was sitting in the continuously spreading pool of dragon blood. The unicorn's hooves were red with it.

The dragon spoke first. It was no longer the powerful voice Gerek had grown accustomed to. "Not what I had expected from a dragonslayer of your reputation, ap Aodhan."

Gerek crawled closer, aware of the fact that he'd already be dead had that been the dragon's intentions. In moving, he discovered one leg was broken. He moaned with pain but crawled anyway. The same leg had been broken before

He reached the dragon's head and surveyed the damage there. The dragon would raid no more flocks. "I—"

"—moved to protect the other man," the dragon said it for him. "Instinct. Even as when I torched him. We are both driven by those instincts. It's the only way both of us have survived to become what we are. The last."

The emerald eyes shifted to the unicorn that waited, uncertain of her own fate in this haven turned slaughterhouse. "Take her, Gerek ap Aodhan. She has none of the warrior instincts that have allowed both of us to survive."

"Is there nothing I can do for you?"

"Nothing, human. Asking that shows me I've at least changed you from the man who came in here for my blood. Leave me now while I have the strength to seal these caverns behind you. I'll not have the peasants down here after my head when I'm gone."

Dragging his bad leg, Gerek found the largest piece of the spear's shaft and used it for a crutch. Slowly, in great pain, he got to his feet and made his way toward the lair's exit. At the tunnel, he turned back and called for the unicorn. The fragile creature looked to the dragon, and some unspoken communication seemed to pass between them. Then the unicorn trotted through the blood to join Gerek.

Gerek turned to leave, but the dragon called him back.

"Do me one favor," it bade him.

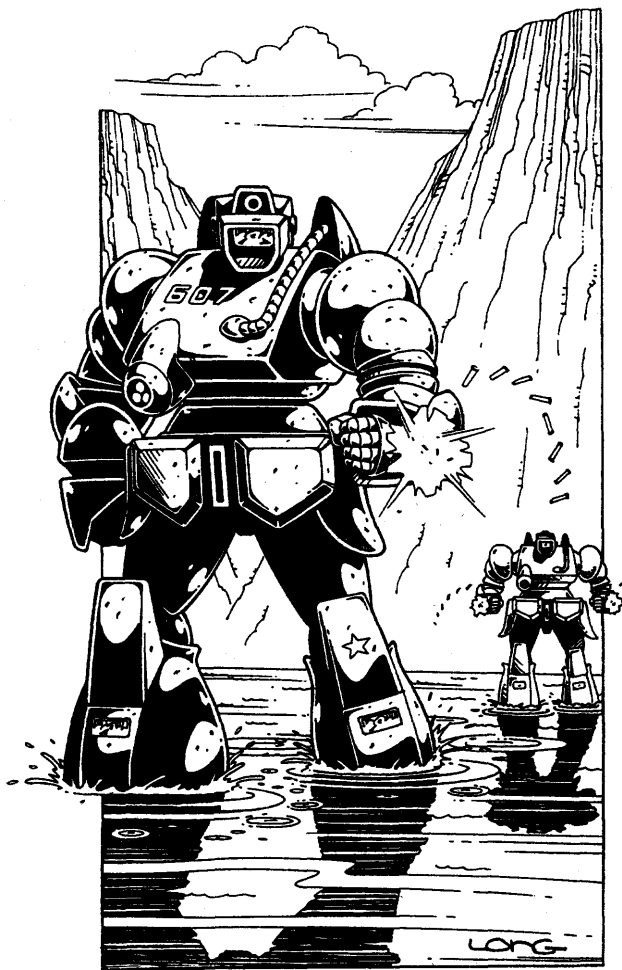
"Name it."

"The others will forget. Humans have never wanted to believe in things of magic—dragons, unicorns, faerie elves—but you know different. Remember me as I was, ap Aodhan."

"I will."

Ω





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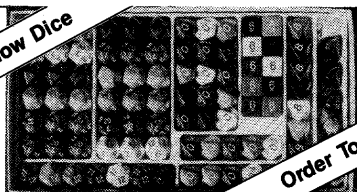
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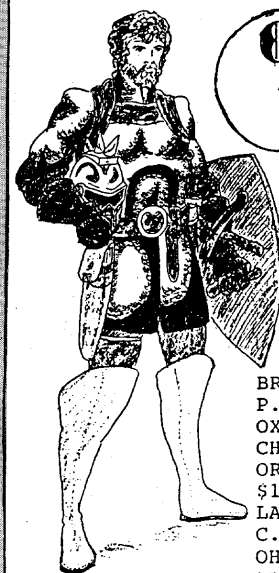
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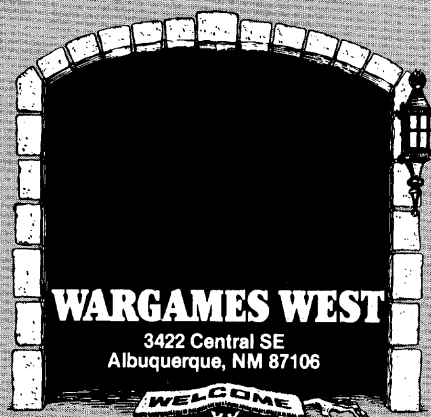


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The Rules

Continued from page 36

Fitting in

On page 111 of the AD&D® 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*, Gary Gygax sug-

gested that novices play their first role-playing games alone, without interference from experienced players. However, most GMs have no time to run separate campaigns for beginners, and most new players resent being segregated. Let new-

comers play an introductory adventure in your regular campaign. Before the new player arrives, make sure that the experienced players will be polite. Never let anyone ridicule a newcomer. Both the GM and the party must listen to the new player and encourage him to play, reacting enthusiastically to good suggestions and setting aside terrible ideas with reasoned but respectful comment. Established players can nurture the new party member while role-playing. In fantasy games, tough fighters may give terse and cynical warnings about the adventure to come, while intellectual wizards might recall their own apprenticeships and take a special interest in the newcomer.

Every new player needs a character, but many new players become bored while rolling one up. Be sure that the new player understands that generating a character is part of preparing to play, not the game itself. Briefly explain that in role-playing games you pretend to be another person, and randomly generated statistics (created by dice rolls) show how strong, smart, dextrous, etc., the imaginary character is. Point out that as characters gain adventuring experience, they generally (if the game allows for it) become more powerful. You might compare rolling up a character to dealing out cards in a poker game. Your character's statistics—like a poker hand—determine how you will play. Then let the new player choose between playing a prerolled character and generating a new one. If a game's PC-generation system is prolonged, a pregenerated PC would be best; offer a choice between two or three.

If the new player wants to, roll up his own character, do not complicate the process with unnecessary detail. Height, weight, and other details seldom matter in a first adventure. Explain what each important statistic means and how it is determined. Let the new player participate, but do not flood your student with data. When the new player gets to choose something, such as race, class, or alignment, mention only the most attractive possible choices. In most fantasy games, fighters and thieves probably make the most satisfactory beginning PCs. Clerics require especially sensitive role-playing to avoid seeming effete. Magic-users die easily, and the rules for spells are complex. If your new player wants to play a magic-user, you should probably wait until later to explain the difference between memorized spells, known spells, and spells written in the spell book.

In games with an alignment system, new players might not understand concepts such as "lawful" and "chaotic." Most new players become even more confused when they are given a list of which alignments believe in individual rights and which might condone murder. You can describe alignments by pairing fictional characters with their ethos. For example, if the new-

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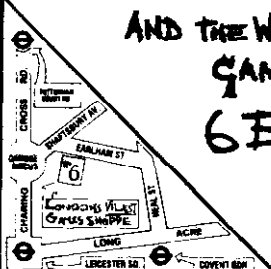


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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom. We are no longer able to make personal replies; please send no SASEs with your questions.

This month, the sage continues his tour of the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. *DMG* is the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *PHB* is the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* (*PHB*).

Dungeon Master's Guide

What are the size, speed factor, and other statistics for the scythe wielded by the minor death produced by a deck of many things (see the *DMG*, page 166-167)?

Speed factor is irrelevant in the case of the minor death; it always strikes first. In a character's hands, a scythe makes a cumbersome weapon at best. I suggest the following statistics: cost 5 gp; weight 7 lbs.; size L; type P/S (the blade has both a curved cutting edge and a sharp point); speed factor 10; damage 2d4 (S-M)/1dG (L).

Where is the table for determining what kind of coins can be found in a *Bucknard's everful purse*? How long can the purse be empty before it becomes nonmagical? I know the book says "a few minutes," but what does that really mean?

The table was accidentally printed on page 160 of the *DMG*, under the heading "*BAG OF TRANSMUTING*." Individual DMs are free to define "a few minutes," but I suppose 2-5 minutes is a good base value. The real intent behind the "few minutes" comment is to say that a character is free to empty the purse and get his daily crop of coins, but must put at least one coin back in before he goes off and does anything else. Most DMs rule that a coin of each type must be present to get the full effect; for example, if a purse could produce silver, electrum, and gold, then leaving just one silver piece inside would keep it functioning—but the next day it would produce only silver pieces.

How come chain mail costs less than armor that doesn't protect as the wearer well? Chain mail, for instance, costs 75 gp, vs. 120 gp for

scale mail. This is a misprint, right?

No misprint. Scale mail costs more to make than chain mail, but its older, less efficient design makes it inferior to chain mail. The same goes for ring mail (cost 100 gp). People who know how to make chain mail needn't bother with scale or ring mail. What kind of armor is available in any given campaign depends on the time period in which the game is set (see the *DMG*, page 35).

Can a *ring of spell storing* containing a *find familiar* spell enable a nonwizard character to summon a familiar? How long would it take to cast *find familiar* from a *ring of spell storing*? How does the "one attempt per year" rule apply to characters using a *ring of spell storing*?

It is perfectly reasonable to say that only wizards have the mental training to maintain the empathic link between master and familiar. It also is perfectly reasonable to say that a *ring of spell storing* is powerful enough to make any spell stored within it work for the ring's owner. Individual DMs must decide on their own which is the case. Any spell cast from a *ring of spell storing* has a casting time of five. The character who puts the spell into the ring, however, must go through the spell's normal casting procedure. In this case, the wizard must fire up the brazier full of incense and spend up to 24 hours casting. Note that this makes it very unlikely that *find familiar* will be found in a *ring of spell storing* and, even more unlikely that NPC spell-casters can be hired to restore it to the ring. The "one attempt per year" limit applies to both the ring and the owner; that is, only one attempt can be made each year with any given ring, and a character who has two rings cannot try to summon a familiar twice in the same year by using each ring once.

My wife and I have a continuing argument over the properties of the *vorpai blade*. She insists that strength bonuses are considered when determining whether the weapon severs a victim's neck. I point out that the footnote on page 186 of the *DMG* says only the sword's +3 bonus affects the score required to sever.

This is probably the first time I've been asked to settle a domestic argument. Bonuses for strength, specialization, spells (such as *bless* or *prayer*), situation (opponent surprised, prone, etc.), or the like do not affect the score needed to sever. Thus, it is quite possible to solidly hit an oppo-

nent, due to a good roll and high bonuses, but not sever his neck. In fact, the table could—and probably should—read as follows (the same table can be used for the *sword of sharpness*):

	Unmodified to-hit roll needed to sever head/neck
Opponent	
Normal/armored	17-20
Larger than man-size	18-20
Solid metal or stone	19-20

The *PHB* says that rogues can have a maximum score of 95% in each of their special abilities, but the *DMG* has a table on page 23 that shows scores of 99%. However, the same table in the *Dungeon Master's Screen* shows no score above 95%.

The maximum score is 95%. The table in the *Dungeon Master's Screen* corrects Table 19 in the *DMG*.

Will a *girdle of dwarvenkind* allow a nondwarf to get full benefits from a *hammer*, +3 *dwarven thrower*?

No; nor will the wearer suffer magical item malfunctions as dwarves do (see the *PHB*, page 21).

What is the correct formula for a fighter's individual experience awards, as listed in the *DMG*, page 48? Does the fighter's level change the award? Is the award given for every monster the party defeats?

The formula is the monster's hit dice multiplied by 10. The word "level" is a misprint. All individual awards are just that; they are awarded to characters who do things without help from other characters. For fighters, the individual award for defeating a monster is made after a one-on-one contest.

Monstrous Compendium

How come red dragons in the *Monstrous Compendium* have fewer hit dice than blue dragons and no more hit dice than green dragons? What does the red dragon's THAC0 entry, "7 (at 9 HD)," mean? Also, the example in the general information section says that a black dragon's base hit dice is 10, but the black dragon's description says the base is 12 HD.

There is a typo in the red dragon's statistics. A red dragon's base hit dice is 15; a

Continued on page 74

Alternative Armies



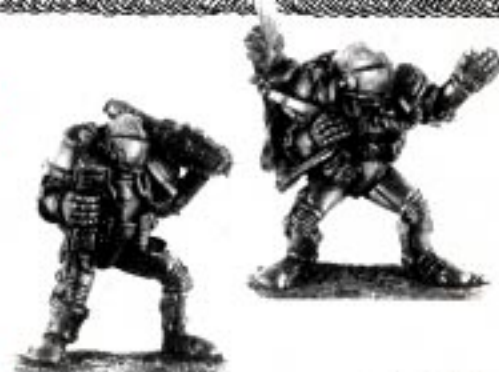
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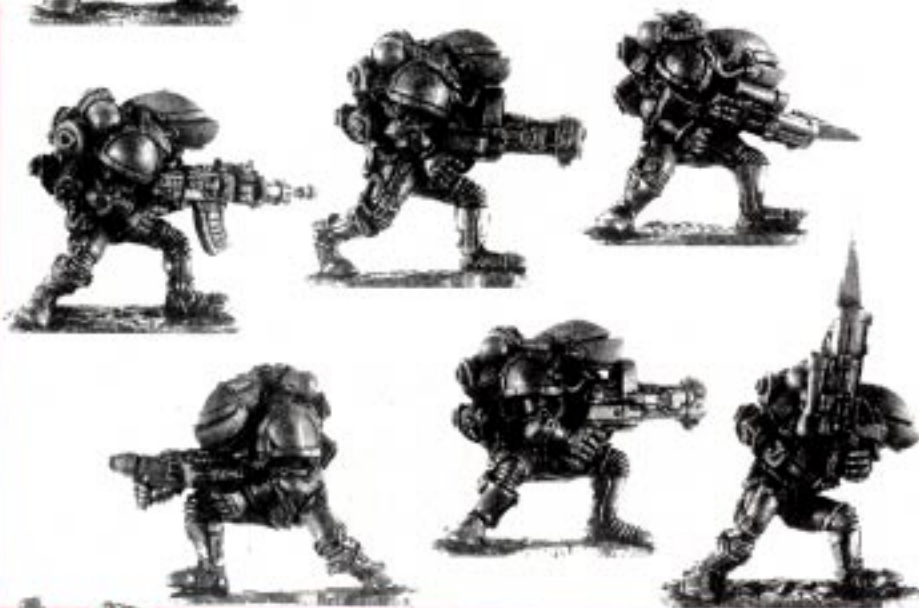
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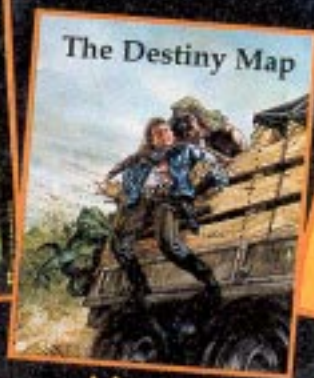
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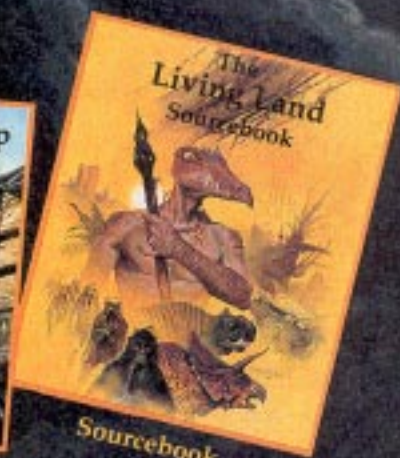
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S a g e

Continued from page 71

black dragon's base hit dice is 12 (the example is wrong). All dragons' THAC0s are determined by their adjusted hit dice, so a hatchling red dragon (9 HD) has a THAC0 of 11.

Is there some mistake in the horse listing in the *Monstrous Compendium*? I mean, simple riding horses have more hit dice and a better THAC0 than light or medium war horses, and they move a lot faster than medium war horses.

There sure seems to be an error. If you want to cut riding horses down to size, just treat them as light war horses with one attack (a bite) for 1-2 hp damage. Regardless of statistics, non-war horses are nervous creatures that are more likely to flee than to fight.

What do the "juvenile" entries in the *Monstrous Compendium's* giant experience-point value entries mean? Why are young giants treated like adult giants of different species? Shouldn't young giants have abilities that reflect those of adults of their own race? If young giants are treated as adult members of other races, shouldn't you use those races' experience values? Just how tall are young giants?

Those mysterious experience-point values are part of an aborted attempt to do just what you suggest—extrapolate juvenile abilities from adult abilities. However, this was dropped during the editing process to keep things simple and to keep the revised giants more compatible with the ones in the AD&D 1st Edition game. The juvenile experience-point values were printed in error and should be ignored; use the experience values from the appropriate race when making experience awards for juvenile giants.

If you want to derive young giants' abilities from adult members of the race,

here's the discarded system: To determine an immature giant's age randomly, roll 1d4. A roll of 4 indicates an infant with no combat abilities and -4 hit points per die (minimum 1 hp/HD). Other rolls indicate juveniles with penalties to hit points, attack rolls, and damage done equal to the die roll. Juveniles in the -3 category also do one less die of damage per blow. For example, a -1 hill giant juvenile would have -1 hp/HD (with a minimum of 1 hp/HD) and a THAC0 of 10, and would do 1d6 -1 hp damage with its fists or 2d6 +6 with a club. A -3 hill giant has -3 hp/HD, a THAC0 of 12, does 1d6 -3 hp damage with its fist or 1d6 +4 with a club. Juveniles can hurl rocks; their minimum range is the same as an adult's, and the maximum range is equal to the adult maximum minus a value equal to 10 yards times the juvenile's combat penalty; the combat penalty also is subtracted from each die of damage that the rock does (minimum of 1 hp/damage die). For example, a -1 juvenile hill giant can hurl a rock from three to 190 yards for 2d8 -2 hp damage.

Infant giants are less than one-quarter the height of an adult, but are usually not less than one-sixth adult height. Juveniles are anywhere from one-quarter adult height to full adult height; a -3 juvenile would be from one-quarter to one-half adult height, a -2 juvenile would be from one-half to three-quarters adult height, and so on.

Miscellaneous

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MINIATURES

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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NOTE: Be aware that there are now at least four SF/fantasy/gaming conventions with very similar names: ICON, held in Iowa; I-CON, in Long Island, N.Y.; I-KHAN, in Colorado Springs, Colo.; and I-CON, in British Columbia. Other duplicated convention names have been noted (e.g., DEMICON in Des Moines, Iowa, and Aberdeen, Md.). Plan carefully!

DEEPSOUTHCON XXVIII, June 7-10

"XXVIII" will be held at the Quality Inn-East Ridge in Chattanooga, Tenn. Scheduled guests include Bob Shaw, Raymond Feist, Darrell Sweet, Forrest Ackerman, and Bryan Webb. Registration: \$25. Write to: DEEPSOUTHCON, Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422; or call: (404) 578-8461 (no collect calls, please).

GLATHRICON '90, June 8-10

Sponsored by the Evansville Gaming Guild, this 7th annual convention will be held in Evansville, Ind. Steve Jackson will be the guest of honor; Skip Williams will be the DM guest of honor; and Jean Rabe, the RPGA™ Network Coordinator, will represent the Network. The artist guest of honor will be Lucy Synk. RPGA™ tournaments include AD&D® Feature, Masters, Grandmasters and Joe Martin Benefit games, with GURPS®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Feature and Masters, JAMES BOND®, PARANOIA®, PARANOIA® Masters, CHILL®, DC HEROES®, CHAMPIONS®, and STAR TREK® games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a large art show and print shop, an art auction, a masquerade, a miniatures-painting contest, seminars, and panels. Registration: \$20. Write to: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716; or call: (812) 477-9508.

ADVENTURERS' INN, June 9-10

This gaming convention will be held in the Mother Load Fairground in Sonora, Calif. Fantasy gaming will be highlighted. Other activities include a large open gaming area, seminars, and SCA demonstrations. Registration: \$13/day or \$20 for the weekend at the door. Plus, a \$3 refund for anyone in a medieval/fantasy costume. Write to: ADVENTURERS' INN, P.O. Box 576, Sonora CA 95370.

ARTYCON II, June 9-10

This convention will be held at the Community Activity Center, 3281 Sheridan Rd., Fort Sill OK. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CHAMPIONS®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, ROLEMASTER®, SHADOWRUN®, STAR TREK®, and STAR WARS® games, with a miniatures-painting contest and Japanimation. Registration: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door for both days, or \$4 for one day. Write to: ARTYCON II, ITR Office, 1721 Gruber Rd., Ft. Sill OK 73503.

SAGA '90, June 9-11

This year, SAGA is moving to Globe High School in Sydney, Australia. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, and other role-playing, board, miniatures, and freeform games. Write to: SAGA, P.O. Box 71, Kingsway NSW: AUSTRALIA 2208.

MADISON GAME DAY '90, June 10

This convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 3841 E. Washington Ave., Madison, Wis. Events include role-playing, historical, miniatures, and board games. Registration: \$5, no game fees. Judges are welcome. Write to: MADISON GAME DAY, c/o Nick Klapper, 1909 Heath Ave., Madison WI 53704; or call (608) 249-3264.

NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL June 15-17

The "Festival" will be held at the Bayou Plaza, in New Orleans, La. The guest of honor is Roger Zelazny, and the artist guest of honor is Dell Harris. Other guests include George R. R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, Greg Costikyan, Denny O'Neil, and many more. Other activities include programming, an art show and auction, a hospitality suite, a dance, a meet-the-guest party, movies and videos, a dealers' room, and a charity event for the Battered Womens' Center and the Chinchuba Institute. Registration: \$20 until June 1, or \$25 at the door. No preregistration after June 1. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089.

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ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION II, June 16-17

This gaming convention will be held at the Central Penn Business School in Summerdale, Pa. Activities include a dealers' area, a miniatures-painting contest, videos, and over 60 role-playing, war, miniatures, science-fiction, and other games. The guest of honor is Tom Wham. Registration: \$4-6/day and \$8-12 for both days; depending on the date of registration. Membership is limited. Write to: M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

PHANCON '90, June 16-17

Sponsored by the Gilde der Fantasyrollenspieler, Fantasywelt, Fantasy Productions, and Spiel und Fantasy, this convention will be held at the Stadthalle (Municipal Hall) in Ratingen, West Germany, and features a wide variety of games. Registration: DM 6/day or DM 10/weekend in advance, or DM 7/day and DM 12/weekend at the door. Write to: GTR, c/o Bernd Streckman, Bruchstr. 48, 4030 Ratingen 1, WEST GERMANY

MICHICON GAMEFEST '90, June 22-24

This convention will be held in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, a suburb of Detroit, Mich. Events include 50 RPG, 60 board, and 60 miniatures games. Other activities include three used-games auctions, and open gaming. Registration: \$12 for the weekend, or \$7/day preregistered. Write to: Metro Detroit Gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192; or call (days) Barry Jensen at: (313) 591-2300 ext. 325; or call (evenings) Mike Bartnikowski at (313) 928-7744.

POLYCON VIII, June 22-24

The Simulation and Adventure Gaming Assoc. of CalPoly is sponsoring "VIII." Events include stories and illustrations, movies, Livenures, speakers, games, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$22 for weekend passes or \$12 for one-day passes at the door (GMs have special prices). Write to: POLYCON VIII, c/o SAGA, Activities Planning Center, Box 168, San Luis Obispo CA 93401, and ask about special room rates; or call Stacey Fetters at: (805) 545-9858.

WORLD DIPCON '90, June 22-24

The 1990 International DIPLOMACY* Championships will be held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. The tournament will consist of four rounds of DIPLOMACY* games, with a DIPLOMACY* team competition and tournaments in CIVILIZATION*, TITAN*, and RAILWAY RIVALS* games. The tournament winner will be named the 1990 International DIPLOMACY* Champion. Registration: \$20, with tournament housing for \$15/night double or \$30/night single. Write to: David Hood, 15-F Estes Park, Carrboro NC 27510.

DEMICON II, June 23-25

The Harford Adventure Society presents "II," to be held at the Holiday Inn-Aberdeen House, in Aberdeen, Md. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, PARANOIA*, CHAMPIONS*, SHADOWRUN*, CAR WARS*, and WAR-HAMMER 40,000* games. Registration: \$17.50 before May 31, or \$20 at the door. Write to: DEMICON II, c/o Harford Adventure Society, PO. Box 1063, Aberdeen MD 21001.

ORIGINS/DRAGON CON '90, June 28-July 1

The 1990 National Gaming Exposition and Trade Show will be held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor are Tom Clancy and Doug Niles, with more guests to

be announced. Role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer game tournaments will be held around the clock. Other activities include panels and workshops, game and consignment auctions, a masquerade, an art show and print shop, and video rooms! Write to: ORIGINS '90, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

IMAGINATION '90, June 30

This convention will be held at the Crawley College of Technology in Crawley, West Sussex, England. Events include AD&D®, BLOOD-BOWL*, STAR TREK*, and STAR WARS* games. Other activities include war games, miniatures, board games, and films. Registration: £3 until June 29; £3.50 thereafter. £1 discount for children under 14. Send an SASE to: Graham Todd, 36 Deerswood Rd., West Green, Crawley, West Sussex, UNITED KINGDOM RH11 7JN.

ECONOMYCON III, July 6-8

This convention will be held at Alma School in Mesa, Ariz. Events include AD&D®, BATTLE-TECH*, BATTLE FOR MOSCOW*, CIVILIZATION*, and SUPREMACY* games, with open gaming, Japanimation, World War II micro-armor, and the LOST WORLDS* fantasy-book game. Write to: ECONOMYCON, 2740 S. Alma School, Mesa AZ 85202.

ARCANACON VIII, July 12-15

Random Incorporated is again holding this nonprofit convention, at the Collingwood Education Center in Melbourne, Australia. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU*, RUNE-QUEST*, WARHAMMER 40,000*, and HUNTER PLANET* games. Write to: ARCANACON VIII, Random Inc., PO. Box 125, Parkville 3052, NSW, AUSTRALIA.

ATLANTICON '90, July 13-15

This convention will be held at the Baltimore Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel and the Baltimore Convention Center. Activities include gaming and free game demonstrations, game auctions, a flea market, 24-hour open gaming areas, and discount coupons for all preregistrants. Registration: \$14 for the weekend prepaid, or \$18 at the door (one-day passes also available at the door). Write to: ATLANTICON, PO. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220; or call: (301) 574-5066.

COSCON '90, July 13-15

Sponsored by the Circle of Swords, this gaming convention will be held at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pa. Events include first-run RPGA™ tournaments and events, board games, a dealers' area, a flea market, and a miniatures-painting contest. On-site housing is available. Registration: \$10 until June 30, or \$15 thereafter. Write to: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler PA 16003; or call Dave Schnur at: (412) 283-1159.

QUIN CON V, July 13-15

This three-day event will offer RPGs, fantasy and historical miniatures, board and card games, and RPGA™ events. A special tournament for the Hemophilia Fund will also take place. The guest of honor will be game and module designer, Lester Smith. This event will be held at the Roadway Inn in Quincy, Ill. Ask about special rates for convention attendees. Registration: \$5/day or \$12 for the weekend, preregistered. Write to: QUIN CON V, 3632 Maine St., Quincy IL 62301 (include an SASE); or call (217) 223-8498.

DOVERCON VI, July 14-15

It will be held this year at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, NH. Activities include an RPGA™ AD&D® tournament and many other gaming events, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Registration: \$15 at the door, or \$10 for one day. Dealers and judges are welcome. Write to: DOVERCON VI, P.O. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

CASTLECON III, July 20-22

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Bethesda, in Bethesda, Md. Events include SE fantasy, gaming, music, costumes, computers, science, and friendship. Registration: \$18 until June 30; \$25 at the door. Write to: FanTek, 1607 Thomas Rd., Fort Washington MD 20744.

CHIMERA, July 20-22

This convention will be held in the Hyatt Regency Woodfield in Schaumburg, Ill. Guests of honor are Connie Willis, Howard Waldrop, and Gardner Dozois. Other guests include Richard Knaak, Fred Pohl, and Barbara G. Young. The seminars are all designed to make the reader of SF more than just a consumer. Registration: \$40; children's rate is \$30 with babysitting if you register before June 1. Write to: CHIMERA, 1016 Columbian, Oak Park IL 60302.

Continued on page 94

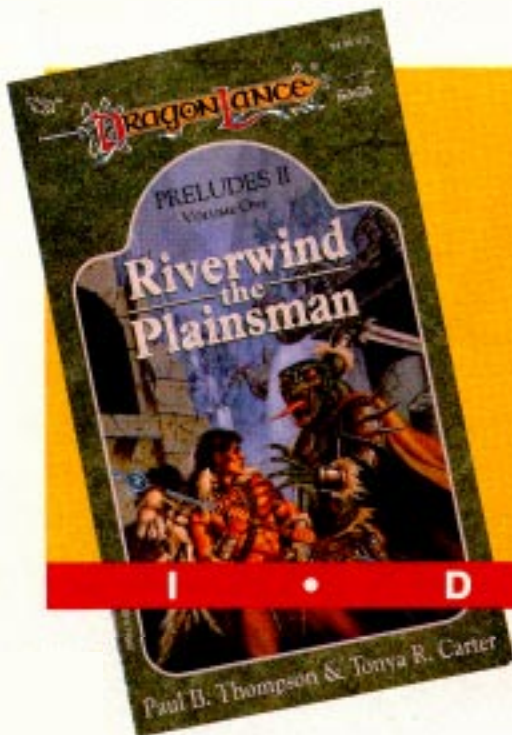


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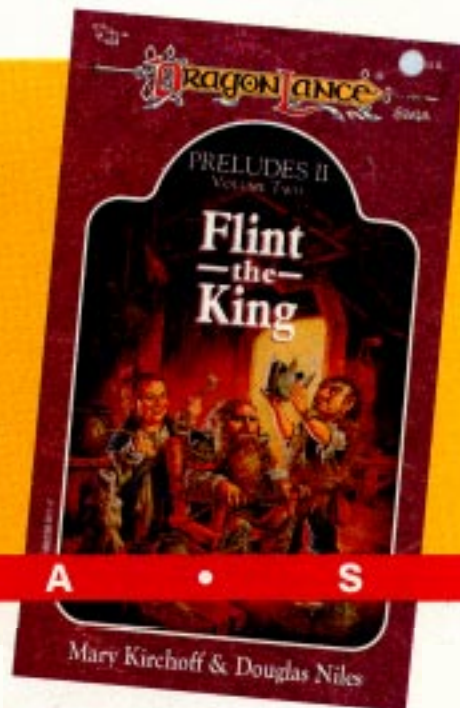
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NOVEL

I • D • E • A • S



Return trips to Krynn

by Will Larson

Despite acquiring a possibly terminal case of Telephone Ear from interviewing the—count 'em—nine authors of 1990's lineup of DRAGONLANCE® saga titles from TSR's book department, this writer is nevertheless eager to spread the news about what's in store for all you fans of this series. Six new titles (three are co-written) will make their appearance this year.

The Preludes II Trilogy

Three of the six titles make up the Preludes II Trilogy, which consists of the adventures of the original DRAGONLANCE saga companions during the five-year period prior to their reunion at Solace.

Riverwind, the Plainsman (March) issues from the same writing team that gave us last year's *Darkness and Light* and 1988's *Red Sands*: Paul B. Thompson and Tonya R. Carter. The story relates the courting quest of Riverwind for the hand of his beloved, Goldmoon. Out of favor with Goldmoon's father, chief of the Que-Shu tribe, because of his belief in the old gods, Riverwind is given a seemingly impossible task: to discover proof of the existence of his gods and return with irrefutable evidence. Accompanied by a fellow tribal heretic, the soothsayer Catchflea, Riverwind encounters draconians, a black dragon, and unspeakably evil alchemists.

Getting to know Riverwind presented an intriguing challenge to the authors. "Unlike some of the characters," Paul relates, "Riverwind wasn't fully developed in the earlier books. We essentially had a character and had to make up a lot of background for him," which the young writers found "both a drawback and a plus."

"We tried to make Riverwind more human and not just a one-note hero," adds Tonya. "He has doubts and troubles."

Besides his projects for TSR, Paul is currently circulating two novels to potential publishers. Readers may run across his fantasy *Sundipper*, published several years ago by St. Martin's Press. Tonya has recently been concentrating on short stories and is contemplating a mystery set in her native North Carolina, even though she and her husband will soon be moving to New York State.

Flint, the King (July) represents a milestone for authors Mary Kirchoff and Doug Niles in that it was the first collaborative writing effort for each of them. "It doesn't mean that you do only half the work; Doug points out. 'Each of us did more than write half a book, but I think we came up with a better story because of it.'"

"Going into this project," Mary joins in, "we assumed that our strengths and weaknesses would offset each other. Doug does great battles and magic, and my strengths tend to be characters and dialogue, and that's worked out very nicely."

Flint, the King brings Flint Fireforge, the gruff but lovable dwarf favorite, "back to his old hometown, Hillhome, which is now doing trade with mountain dwarves, the traditional enemies of his people," relates Doug. "Once there, he uncovers a murder mystery that involves a member of his own family, which leads him to the dwarven kingdom of Thorbardin." In the course of his investigation in that underground kingdom, "he tumbles into a crevasse and lands amongst a colony of gully dwarves, who proclaim him king against his will. He discovers that the derro dwarves are up to a very, very nasty plot, and yet he can't do anything because he's a virtual prisoner of the gully dwarves."

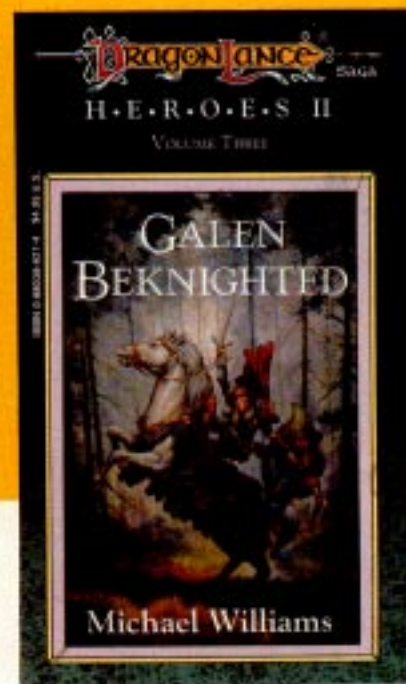
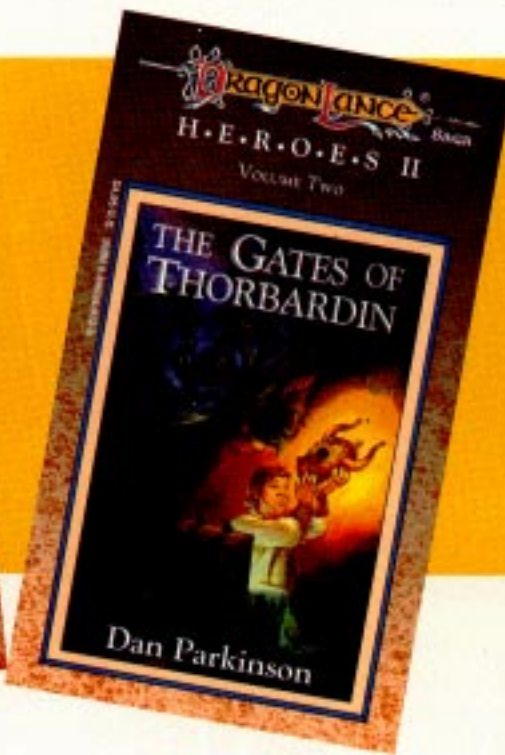
Doug's fondness for Flint is hardly new. For several years at GEN CON® game fairs, he was the voice of the irascible dwarf in

the popular "readers' theater" sessions.

Mary relates an eerie experience. "The first time I tried to make Flint talk, he just sat there with his lips moving. I paced around the house and drank another cup of coffee, but I just couldn't make words come out of his mouth." Fortunately, her editor came to her rescue with a favorite trick of Mary's own by suggesting she assign some famous personality the role of Flint. Since no one voice seemed adequate, she ended up choosing Wilfred Brimley and Yosemite Sam. "It was just as if the clouds had opened up," confides Mary. "From that point on, I never had a problem trying to think of what Flint would say, although his romantic lines to his love interest still give me pause!"

Doug is the author of the best-selling Moonshae Trilogy. He is currently enmeshed in developing the Maztica Trilogy, also set in the Forgotten Realms. (*Ironhelm* was released in April; *Viperhand* is scheduled for September.) For 1991, he plans to develop two massive games commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II, one set in the European Theater of Operations and the other in the Pacific Theater. Mary's most recent book was the popular *Kendermore*, featuring Tasslehoff Burrfoot. According to Mary, "That means that now I've covered the Abbott and Costello of Dragonlance" in Tas and Flint.

Winding up the Preludes II Trilogy in November is *Tanis, the Shadow Years*, by yet another mixed-gender writing team, the multitalented duo of Barbara and Scott Siegel. The books premise hinges on an intriguing plot twist. At the request of an old, dying mage, Tanis travels into the mage's memory in search of the old man's long-lost love. When the mage dies, his memory of his love of her will also die. He, however, desperately wants her to live on



after him. "Tanis has to find her and return to the present before the old mage breathes his last," explains Scott. "If he fails, the girl—as the mage remembers her—will disappear, completely forgotten, and Tanis could find himself lost in a place where only the dead can go."

Barbara elaborates. "Memory travel, as we created it, is different from time travel. In time travel, Tanis would simply go back into the past the way that it had occurred. But in our book, Tanis goes back into a past that's entirely subjective. Within the mage's memory, events can occur whether they happened before or not. The key is whether the wizard believed that they had happened. Memory has gaps, and things can change much as they do in a dream, because reality is only as sturdy as the mind that remembers it."

Here the plot takes yet another twist. When Tanis finally meets the woman, he can't help but fall in love with her. Barbara explains the new complication. "His purpose in finding this woman has to do with another man's love of her, so he's falling in love with this other man's woman inside the mind of the man who loves her. Talk about mind games! What's a half-elf to do?"

The prolific husband-and-wife team has written 37 books to date, both individually and in collaboration. Besides *Tanis*, the *Shadow Years*, other recent or soon-to-be-published titles are *The Encyclopedia of Hollywood* (Facts on File), *Cat Tricks: 29 Silly Stunts You and Your Cat Can Do Together* (Congdon and Weed), and *The Celebrity Phone Book* (Plume). They've done all of this in addition to their careers as literary agents. Their agency, Seigel & Siegel Ltd., represents a full range of nonfiction and fiction authors, including some familiar to TSR readers, such as R.

A. Salvatore (Icewind Dale and Dark Elf Trilogies), M. S. Murdock (Martian Wars Trilogy), Michael Williams, and Dan Parkinson (see the following section).

The Heroes II Trilogy

Unlike the Preludes II titles, the Heroes II stories are not fixed so specifically in time, and the main characters may be previously less-developed figures from earlier books or even original characters.

June marks the release of *Kaz, the Minotaur*, author Richard Knaak's sequel to his earlier *The Legend of Huma*. Rick describes his story as "a strange plot involving the Knights of Solamnia and some artifacts left behind by a renegade mage, Galan Dracos. Along the way, Kaz meets some old and some new friends and faces threats from every direction, including something that may or may not be a dragon."

Asked what it's like to write a book from the viewpoint of a minotaur, Rick laughs and replies: "I had fun with Kaz, who was a character of my own creation, especially when I put him up against a kender [Delbin, Kaz's companion in this adventure]. A kender isn't a character I would normally touch, but I thought with these two it would be nice to offset them. I enjoyed that. I found out as I was writing that Kaz had both good sides and bad sides. He changed a bit as I wrote, especially when dealing with his own people near the end. I got to see how he was different from the other minotaurs, so that kind of surprised me."

Rick is currently working on *Shadow Steed*, the fourth title in a continuing fantasy series for Warner. The third title in the series, *Wolfhelm*, is due out soon.

The Gates of Thorbardin, by Dan Parkinson, hits the shelves in September. Dan, a

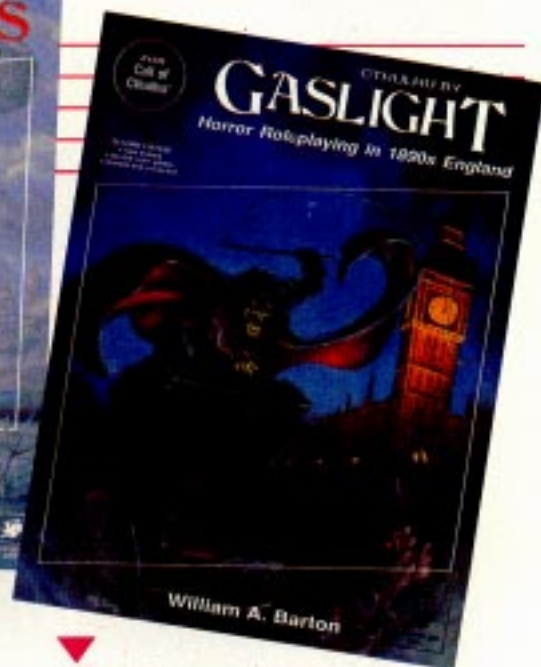
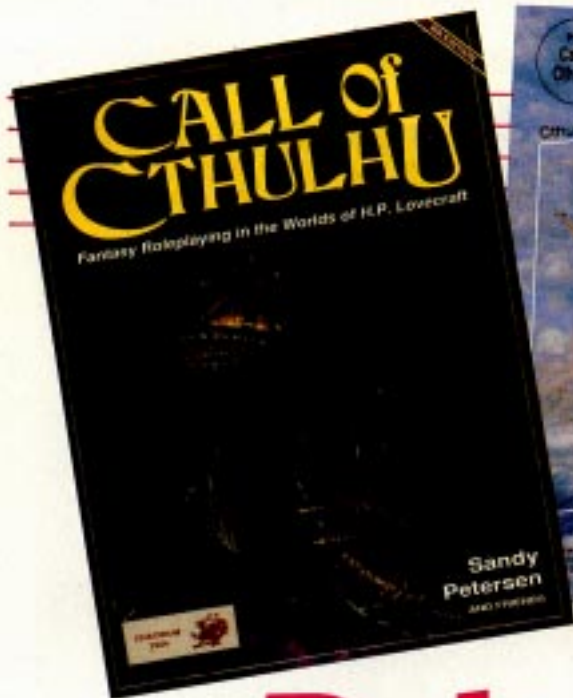
Texan with a rich baritone voice, even made the sacrifice of declining lunch with a lady friend to keep his telephone interview appointment.

A newcomer to the DRAGONLANCE saga, Dan found he had to make some adjustments in order to write about non-human characters (particularly Chane Feldstone and Jillian Firestoke, his dwarven protagonists). The challenge was, in his words, "to bring these people, who are of a different race than I am, very much to life to make them as much as possible three-dimensional people and show them as being the best of what *they* are, and not necessarily the best of what they would be if they were human." The book is essentially, says Dan, "the story of Chane, a Thorbardin dwarf, and his quest to find the Helm of Grallen and to seal the secret entrance of Thorbardin against incursion by magic."

The author has assembled an array of truly wild and wonderful characters. For example, Jillian is armed with a borrowed, point-heavy sword, which has disastrous—though also sometimes effective—consequences when she tries to stop the sword's swing. Chestal Thicketsway, a kender from Hylo, is accompanied against his will by an unexploded spell named Zap, which even seems to talk to him. Unfortunately for him, Chestal has no clue of the deadly origins and nature of the spell. Bobbin is a gnome who has been banished forever from his colony because of incurable insanity. "When Bobbin invents something," quips Dan, "not only is it not oversized nor overly complicated, but it also actually works!"

Parkinson is no stranger to the book world, having written 21 books so far

Continued on page 85



Role-playing reviews

A losing war against the forces of darkness

©1990 by Jim Bambra

Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® role-playing game appeared in 1981. It crept out of the darkness to take an unsuspecting gaming world by surprise, offering a whole new approach to role-playing. Gone were the mighty monster stompers of the fantasy role-playing genre and the fearless travelers of the space lanes. Instead, the CALL OF CTHULHU game (herein called COC) offered player characters the dubious delights of insanity and death.

Like many at the time, I was skeptical of the virtues of a game in which player characters deteriorated rapidly instead of steadily gaining in power and experience. Who wants to play a game in which you know that your character is either going to die or become incarcerated in a dark and dismal asylum for the insane? Not me, I thought. But I was wrong. One game of COC and I was hooked. No, more than hooked—I was a fan who eagerly looked forward to each new release from Chaosium, Inc.

Since then, COC has continued to grow. New editions of the rules appeared, and additional supplements expanded the options available to the Keepers of Arcane Lore (as Game Masters in COC are called). The fourth edition of COC was released

last year. Many of the older supplements have recently been reformatted and re-released. COC is strongly supported and boasts some of the finest role-playing supplements ever published.

This month we take a look at some of the COC recent releases and re-releases. But before moving on, mention must be made of some of the excellent products not covered in this review. In DRAGON® issue #124, Ken Rolston reviewed the *Terror Australis* supplement which provides background on Australia with three adventures. Check it out; you won't be disappointed. In DRAGON issue #138, Ken gave an excellent overview of COC and contrasted it with other styles of role-playing. He covered the COC supplements *Cthulhu Now* and *S. Petersen's Field Guide to Cthulhu Monsters*, and gave them superb ratings.

CALL OF CTHULHU® game, fourth edition

192-page perfect-bound book, eight pages of color plates, large fold-out size-comparisons chart
Chaosium, Inc. \$19.95

Design: Sandy Petersen

Additional text: Glenn Rahman, Lynn Willis, John Sullivan, Alan K. Crandall,

William Hamblin, Keith Herber, Morgan Conrad, Larry DiTillio, Harry Hendersen, H. P. Lovecraft, Steve Perrin, Charlie Krank, Richard Fichera, Joan Carruth, Larry Press, and Tadashi Ehara

Editing: Lynn Willis

Cover illustration: Tom Sullivan

Color plates: Les Edwards, Lee Gibbons, Tom Sullivan, and Chris Marrinan

The fourth-edition COC book is a weighty tome crammed full of rules, background information, adventures, and color plates depicting Lovecraftian horrors in vivid color. The plates are atmospheric and evocatively convey the sanity-destroying entities of H. P. Lovecraft's imagination. The book also contains the bulk of the *Cthulhu Companion* and *Fragments of Fear* supplements. Few changes have been made to the earlier editions or to the aforementioned products. Instead, they have been edited and integrated together. New rules have been added to handle car chases and knocking characters unconscious with one blow. Like the rest of the COC system, the new rules are simple and eminently playable. Also of interest are the reproductions of cartoons that originally appeared in *The Space Gamer* magazine. These take a humorous look at COC and also neatly summarize why COC is differ-

ent from other role-playing games.

The size comparisons fold-out from *Fragments of Fear* is reproduced in the back of the book. It shows at a glance the sheer immensity of Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Ithaqua, and the awesome dimensions of a large dhole. The sizes of the smaller monsters are also readily apparent from the human figures on the fold-out. The inclusion of *Fragments of Fear* also makes available in one place all of the new spells that have appeared in COC supplements over the years.

Background: The fourth edition game presents H. P. Lovecraft's dark and macabre vision in a most satisfying way. It places COC firmly in the 1920s, the period when Lovecraft was writing. This not only makes Lovecraft's stories readily accessible to Keepers and players, but also provides some period charm. The world is recognizably our own, but its distance in time adds to its appeal; this is the era of Prohibition and post-war reconstruction. Layered over the historical setting are the monsters of Lovecraft's somber vision.

There are things that man was not meant to know, but in COC the brave (or foolhardy) Investigators are constantly brought into unequal conflict with those things. Beings that defy the imagination tower over small, inconsequential humans, squashing them underfoot. Others horrors are smaller in stature but no less dangerous. Ghouls, ghosts, daemons from beyond space and time, and Elder Gods threaten to destroy the earth. Between the monsters and the destruction of human life stands only determined Investigators.

Mechanics: COC uses Chaosium's Basic Roleplay System. These elegant rules are easy to use and allow for play to proceed with a minimum of game-rule intrusion. The system allows well-rounded characters to be created with a minimum of fuss (an important feature considering that an Investigator may last for only one game session).

While the game system is simple and elegant, its main strength and much of its flavor lie in the sanity rules. It is taken for granted that humanity is unable to fully comprehend or deal with the myriad horrors of the universe. COC brings the reality of facing armies of slime-covered, tentacle-waving monsters home, as in the following:

Keeper: "It's alive. It moves toward you. Tentacles erupt from its surface." (Characters in other games would be unleashing their combined firepower at this point, but not in COC.) "SAN checks, please!" Frenzied dice rolling results as players check their SAN (sanity) scores. Those who make it are able to act. The ones who fail find their sanity reduced, possibly driving them insane as the shock has proved too much for their fragile minds. Two of the Investigators lie squirming on the floor screaming for their mommies.

As the sane Investigators open fire at the approaching monster, the Keeper chuckles

Continued on page 88

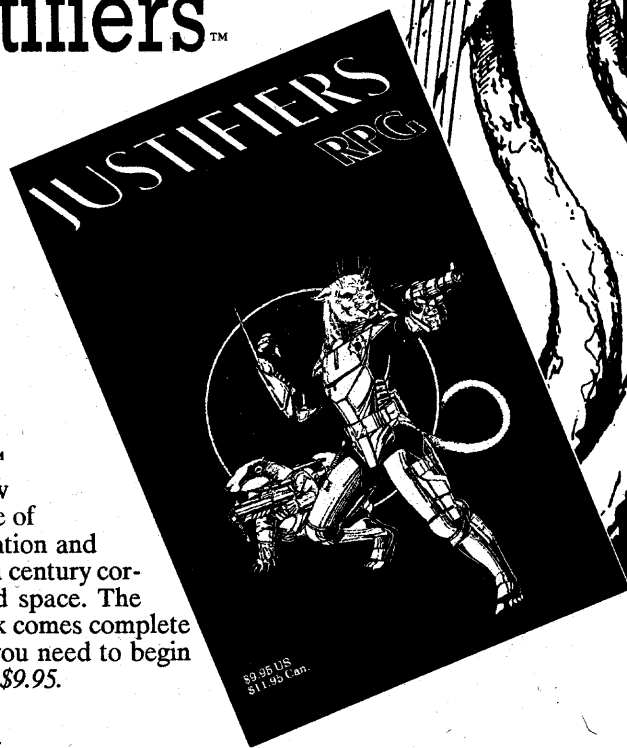
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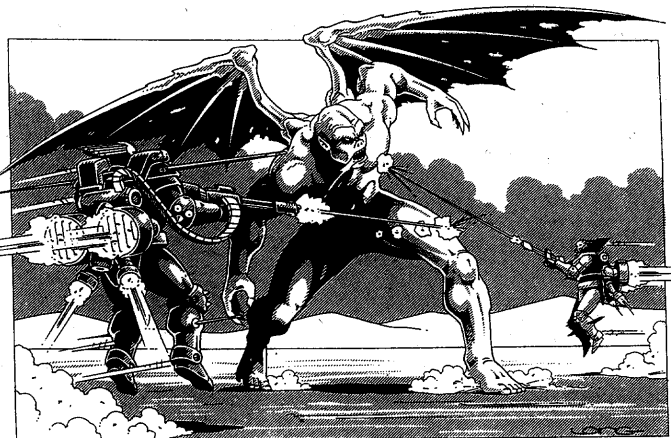
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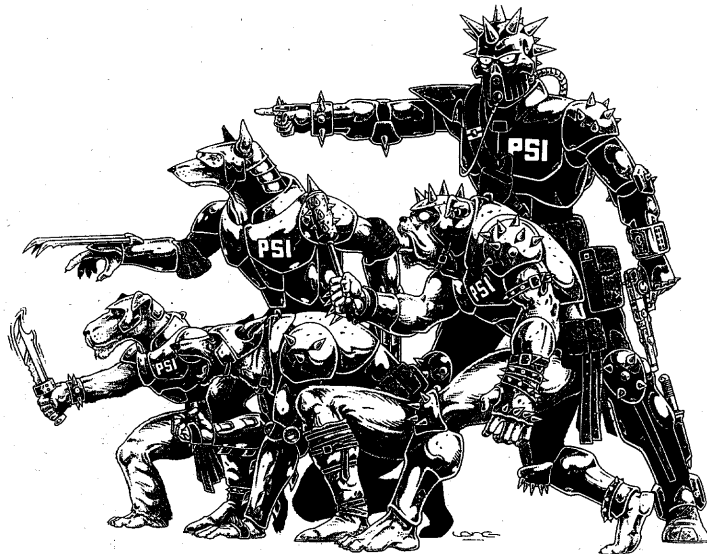
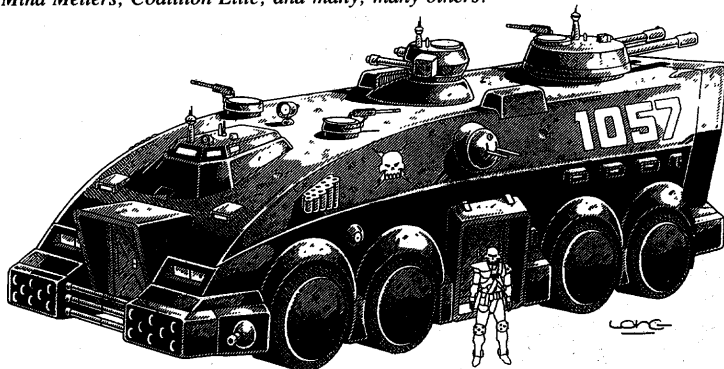


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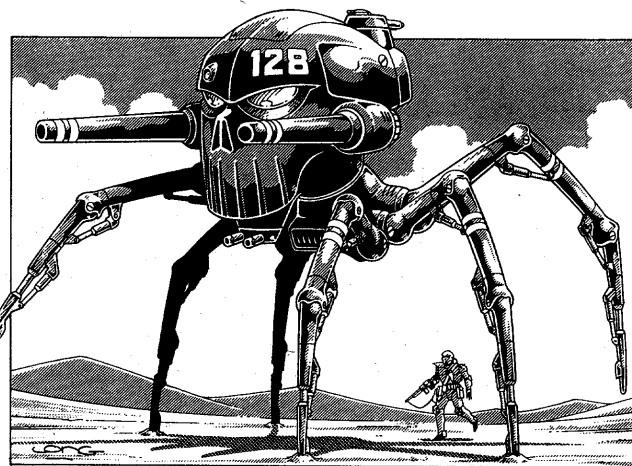
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NOVEL

Continued from page 81

including 1988's popular *Starson*, from TSR. Perhaps best known as a Western writer, his *Calamity Trail*, *Jubilation Gap*, *Ride the Devil's Trail*, and *A Man Called Wolf*, all from Zebra, have been acclaimed by critics as "humorous classics." He has also ventured into historical fiction in his Tall Ships Trilogy (*Fox and the Faith*, *Fox and the Fury*, *Fox and the Flag*) from Pinnacle, seafaring novels of the American Revolution.

Michael Williams, "the Bard of Krynn," reprises his character of Galen "Weasel" Pathwarden, the reluctant hero of his best-selling *Weasel's Luck*, in *Galen Beknighted*, due out in December.

"One of the first things that happens in the book," according to Michael, "is that Galen does indeed become a knight. That may be surprising to readers of *Weasel's Luck*, in that Galen had never been very favorably disposed to the Solamnic Knight-hood to begin with. And yet he's changed in the two to three years since the end of his first adventure. The poor guy really does want to turn over a new leaf, and yet at the same time people don't take him seriously, or they think that he's up to his old tricks." Amidst this general scenario, Sir Weasel's favorite brother, Brithelm,

vanishes, and it's up to the fledgling knight to rescue him.

Rather than growing tired of his self-created, ne'er-do-well hero, Michael found the experience quite exhilarating. "I think I like the Weasel even better than I did before. I was always kind of ambivalent toward Solamnic Knights anyway, because I thought there was a dimension of them that was almost too goody-two-shoes. Here in *Galen Beknighted*, while Galen really wants to embrace those values, it's the same streak of self-righteousness he encounters that really frustrates him."

Michael's advice to young writers: "Marry well," he says emphatically. "My wife Teri has been extraordinarily helpful to me. She's probably the best and most sympathetic critic I have, and my strongest work comes when I listen to her."

Besides chronicling Galen's latest misadventures for TSR, Michael has been developing his own trilogy, *From Thief to King*, for Warner, the first title of which is to appear late this year.

And that not only wraps up the slate for DRAGONLANCE saga books for this year but also wraps up this column. Watch this space in the August issue, #160, when we blast off for the 25th century. Ω

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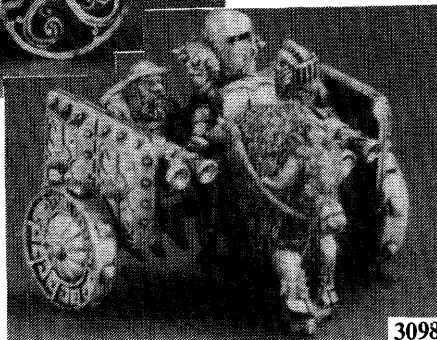
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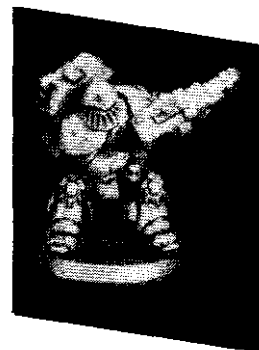


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TSR PREVIEWS

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AD&D® 2nd Edition supplement
by Aaron Allston

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Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00/£9.95
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Kaz, the Minotaur

DRAGONLANCE® saga Heroes II Trilogy,
Volume One

by Richard A. Knaak

After the defeat of the Dark Queen and the death of Huma Dragonbane, Kaz hears rumors of evil incidents. He returns to warn the Knights of Solamnia—and is plunged into a dark nightmare of magic, danger, and déjà-vu.

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AD&D® 2nd Edition supplement
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MC5 *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 6: Kara-Tur appendix

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WGA2 *Falconmaster*

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Role-playing Reviews

Continued from page 82

evilly as the bullets hit the horror with dull thuds—and no effect. It flicks out a tentacle; an Investigator is crushed. Those Investigators still able to run now do so. Another COC adventure has ended in disaster for the Investigators.

The insanity or death of your character may not seem like much of a reward for participating in a role-playing game, but COC is more about finding ways to overcome the dark horrors than about directly confronting them. Well-written COC adventures allow Investigators to carefully uncover clues and discover means of offsetting some of the powers of the monsters. It is the detective work and the accompanying role-playing which make COC intriguing and fun. Sooner or later you're going to have face the dark thing in the woods, but having some idea of what it is may increase your chances of survival. Then again, it might not.

Magical spells and items can be discovered. Books containing ancient rituals an information on the creatures of the Mythos crop up every now and then. Reading them, may drive you insane, and many of the spells have adverse side effects.

Make no mistake: COC captures the horror flavor excellently. Player characters are often the victims but not always so. Good play and luck can circumvent many of the horrors and allow Investigators to triumph over the greatest evil the

world has ever known. The path to success is littered with dead and insane comrades, but the challenge and the need to know draws the Investigators on. COC provides big challenges and big thrills, and it offers some of the finest role-playing experiences available.

Adventures: The fourth edition contains enough adventures to keep any group happily entertained and sanity blasted. "The Haunted House," the first adventure, is simply written and fairly short. It serves as an excellent introduction to the COC setting, featuring detective work, the exploration of an old house, and sufficient horrors to give the characters a taste of things to come. I've run this adventure on numerous occasions as an introduction to COC for new players. Some have died horribly; others have solved its secrets successfully. None have failed to be hooked into playing more COC games.

The other six adventures vary in length and range from average to very good. They are either drawn from a variety of previously published supplements or else appeared in earlier editions of the rules. For groups that meet infrequently, these adventures are an ideal length; some are playable in an evening, and others take several sessions to complete. After playing a few of these, groups with more time will be ready to tackle an extended campaign

such as *Masks of Nyarlathotep*.

Evaluation: If you don't already play COC, all I can do is urge you to give it a try. I enjoy heroic games just as much as anyone else, but I also like variety. A change of approach and emphasis never did anyone any harm. Try COC and discover for yourself why it has made so many converts since its release.

Players already involved in COC will find less in the fourth edition to recommend it. If you own a second- or third-edition game, the *Cthulhu Companion* (also incorporated in the third edition), and *Fragments of Fear*, you lack only the car-chase rules and the improved layout of the three books in one. The rest of the material has received minor editing but no substantial changes.

The fourth edition presents excellent value for its cost. Don't be put off by its sheer size; the bulk of the rules are covered in only 25 pages; the rest is background, monsters, spells, adventures, and source material.

Masks of Nyarlathotep

CALL OF CTHULHU supplement
160-page perfect-bound book, with eight pages of color plates
Chaosium, Inc. **\$18.95**
Design: Larry DiTillio and Lynn Willis
Editing: Lynn Willis

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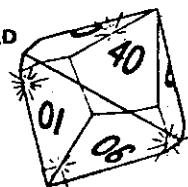
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Cover *illustration*: Lee Gibbons
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Tom Sullivan, and Mark Roland

In this extended campaign, the Investigators are drawn into a titanic struggle against Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos and Outer God. Following skillfully layered clues, the Investigators are led from New York across the globe to London, Cairo, Kenya, or Shanghai. Along the way, they are faced with some of the most powerful and deadly adventures ever written. Death and insanity stalk the Investigators at every turn, but the superb narrative and the tantalizing clues carry the Investigators along at a cracking pace. Sure, Investigators could cut and run at any time, but as the clues and information build in intensity Investigators become driven to find out more. The body count of Investigators promises to be quite high by the end of the adventure, but players are rewarded by participating in a campaign that is an acknowledged role-playing classic. The bulk of material in *Masks of Nyarlathotep* will keep gaming groups thrilled and horrified for months of playing time.

Masks of Nyarlathotep was originally released as a boxed set in 1984. The new edition has been enhanced by the addition of the eight pages of color plates and the color cover. These depict scenes from the adventure that greatly add to its impact.

The illustration of the Chakota, one of the most repulsive creatures ever to appear in a COC supplement, is nothing less than superb—horrible, but superb.

Masks of Nyarlathotep contains first-rate player character handouts. These are rendered as newspaper clippings, handwritten letters, business cards, and even a matchbox that can be folded into a facsimile of the real thing. The information they contain both entice and inform Investigators of the forces and events with which they must contend.

Evaluation: *Masks of Nyarlathotep* is the epitome of COC adventures. It contains detective work, action, and indescribable horrors in all the right quantities. The writing and editing are first class; the adventures perfectly capture what COC is all about. No one should be without a copy of *Masks of Nyarlathotep*. Make sure you put it at the top of your shopping list.

Cthulhu Classics

CALL OF CTHULHU supplement
152-page perfect-bound book
Chaosium, Inc.

\$18.95

Design: Sandy Petersen, Scott Aniolowski,
John Carnahan, John Scott Clegg, Ed
Gore, David A. Hargrave, Marc Hutchinson,
Doug Lyons, Randy McCall,
Mark Pettigrew, and Michael Szymanski

Editing: William Dunn, Lynn Willis, Sherman Kahn, Yurek Chodak, Sandy Petersen, and John B. Monroe

Cover *illustration*: Lee Gibbons

Color plates: Nick Smith and Tom Sullivan

Cthulhu Classics contains five previously published adventures and the *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* campaign.

Shadows of Yog-Sothoth was the first COC adventure published by Chaosium, appearing in 1982 to a warm welcome. It consists of seven adventures linked by the activities of the Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight, whose ultimate aim is to raise the sunken city of R'lyeh from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, thereby unleashing dread Cthulhu upon the world.

Shadows of Yog-Sothoth is a good campaign, but it is not as slickly written or plotted as *Masks of Nyarlathotep*. The links between the individual adventures are much more forced than in *Masks*; the adventures are Keeper controlled and led instead of being layered into one another. Having said that, the individual adventures contain excellent scenes and can easily be run as one-off adventures if the Keeper doesn't want to link them together. The horror elements are well presented, and the adventures span a wide variety of locations and investigative approaches. Opportunities for role-playing, investigation, and combat abound with nameless



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horrors and the depraved cultists who worship the creatures of darkness.

Adventures: The five adventures are drawn from a variety of previously published sources. "The Warren" was a bonus adventure in the original *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*. "The Pits of Bendal-Dolum" and "The Temple of the Moon" were featured in *Terror From the Stars*. "Dark Carnival" appeared in *Curse of the Chthonians*, and "The Secret of Castrenegro" was in the *Cthulhu Companion*.

The adventures range from average to good; "The Secret of Castrenegro" is the best of the five, being set in a town in New Mexico under the influence of a sinister force. "Dark Carnival" and "The Warren" are serviceable and contain some good scenes, but as with most short COC adventures lack the deep layers of plot and motivation found in *Masks of Nyarlathotep* and *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*. "The Pits of Bendal-Dolum" and "The Temple of the Moon" feature jungle expeditions; they are too short on library research and investigation, and too high on unavoidable sanity-blasting horrors for my taste. Though solidly written, they fail to fire me with the enthusiasm to actually play them. Even so, they provide, a change of pace and allow characters to step into Indiana Jones-type adventures as they search for lost ruins in the jungles of South America.

Evaluation: *Cthulhu Classics* offers a good value. The color plates and cover are excellent. While I have reservations about some of the adventures, the inclusion of *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* makes it worth buying. For those groups that don't have time to undertake larger campaigns, the five short adventures will come in very handy. And just in case you missed it earlier, *Masks of Nyarlathotep* is the one to buy and play first. It may spoil you, but we all deserve to be pampered.

The Great Old Ones

CALL OF CTHULHU supplement

176-page perfect-bound book

Chaosium, Inc.

\$17.95

Design: Marcus L. Rowland, Kevin A. Ross, Harry Cleaver, Doug Lyons, L. N. Isynwill, and E. C. Fallworth

Additional material: Lynn Willis, William Dunn, and John B. Monroe

Editing: Lynn Willis

Cover illustration: Tom Sullivan

The Great Old Ones is a collection of six new adventures. Five of the adventures deal with the activities of a particular Great Old One; the sixth features an avatar of an Outer God who is intent on entering the earth. The adventures may be linked together to form a loose campaign, but the linkages are very basic and only provide rationales on how they can be best used in sequence. No plot threads continue from adventure to adventure, making them suitable for use as independent adventures—both a strength and a weakness. While having a Cthulhoid monster lurking in every adventure in epic cam-

paigns such as *Masks of Nyarlathotep* and *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* is eminently feasible, it is less plausible to have them crop up every time the Investigators look into phenomena in the United States. The strength of this book comes from the variety of adventures available.

The Great Old Ones count great Cthulhu within their number, as well as entities such as Glaaki, Hastur, Tsathoggua, and Yig. These beings are worshiped by their followers on earth and possess almost godlike powers. Apart from that, they are very greatly from one another. The book opens with a pseudo-scientific essay on what is known about the Great Old Ones and how they differ from the more powerful Outer Gods of the Mythos. Research has lamentably stagnated since H. P. Lovecraft's pioneering work; only August Derleth continued Lovecraft's researches, but even today we know little about the Great Old Ones' motivations and powers. This section sets the scene for the rest of the book by maintaining the mystery of Lovecraft's creations.

The first adventure, "The Spawn," takes place in New Mexico and draws the adventurers into the mysterious disappearance of an organizer for the "Wobblies," or International Workers of the World, as they were formally known. The adventure mixes detective work and role-playing with subterranean exploration in a convincing and entertaining manner. The fear of harassment by human agents and the "underground" status of the Wobblies at this time requires the Investigators to keep a low profile if they are to avoid being driven out of town. It's a good adventure that mixes politics with Cthulhoid horror.

The second adventure, "Still Waters," is less successful. Spooky houses have long been a staple of COC adventures. My enthusiasm for "The Haunted House" in the COC rules does not extend to every scenario set in and around a house. Once you've played one spooky house, you've played them all, unless they are integral to a more extended adventure.

"Tell Me Have You Seen The Yellow Sign?" is larger in scope and makes use of a wide variety of locations. Set in New Orleans during Mardi Gras, it contains plenty of color and detective work. It also makes good use of Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu" short story as a source of settings and background.

Gangsters and unknowable horrors provide the basis of "One In Darkness." The adventure is neatly executed and, as in "The Spawn," it's refreshing to see the introduction of non-Mythos elements into the story structure.

"The Pale God" draws on Ramsey Campbell's story "Before the Storm" for its inspiration and setting. Players who have read the story may find their enjoyment of the adventure marred as a result. Nonetheless, the adventure has enough unsettling incidents and mystery to keep Investigators entertained.

"Bad Moon Rising," the last adventure, is

the star of the show. Like a full moon it shines brightly, and it includes some of the finest plot twists ever to appear in a shorter COC adventure. Set in England, it starts off simply enough but rapidly escalates into an adventure of wondrous proportions. To find out just what happens, you'll have to play it. I promise you won't be disappointed.

Evaluation: *The Great Old Ones* is a useful addition to the COC range. The inclusion of "Bad Moon Rising" is reason enough to purchase this book. With the exception of "Still Waters," the other adventures stand up well, making *The Great Old Ones* a good source of adventures for Keepers.

Gaslight

CALL OF CTHULHU supplement

128-page perfect-bound book, with six pages of color plates and a two-color fold-out map

Chaosium, Inc.

\$18.95

Design: William A. Barton

Editing: Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis

Cover illustration: Tom Sullivan

Color plates: Lee Gibbons, Chris Marrinan, Dean Morrisey, Nick Smith, and Tom Sullivan

There is something enticing about the streets of Victorian London. Maybe it's the gaslights. Maybe it's the fog. Or maybe it's the way the great wealth of the middle and upper classes contrasts starkly with the crushing poverty of London's working classes. Whatever it is, the Victorian era makes an ideal setting for COC adventuring. Through its streets stalked Jack the Ripper, Count Dracula, Sweeney Todd, Mr. Hyde, and Professor Moriarty.

Gaslight perfectly captures the flavor and mood of the times, taking COC into a previous age. This supplement was originally published in 1986 as a boxed set. All the material in the boxed set has been retained, and some new information has been added, including an essay on world politics, a guide to London stores, and a listing of Cockney underworld slang for Keepers to slip into the mouths of criminal NPCs. New maps show the British Museum, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and Sherlock Holmes's residence at 221B Baker Street.

Gaslight gives an excellent overview of the period and new character creation rules for Victorian adventurers. Included are essays on social class, occupations, crime, cost of living, the government, the monarchy, and the occult. London is described and is depicted on the fold-out map at the back of the book.

Ways of transporting Investigators from later eras are neatly detailed, along with the kind of problems they are likely to encounter in Victorian London. The world of Sherlock Holmes, including a list of his most famous cases, is described, and provision is made for those Keepers who want to include the works of H. G. Wells in their adventures.

"The Yorkshire Horrors," a 46-page adventure included in the book, lets Investigators join forces with Sherlock Holmes to look into the murder accusation hanging over Sherlock's brother. Information is provided for Keepers who have no desire to include Sherlock Holmes in the adventure; it's just a case of changing the names. The adventure takes the Investigators to Yorkshire where they slowly uncover the truth. "The Yorkshire Horrors" is a good period piece for COC. It's lengthy and develops well as the clues pile up, and there are plenty of opportunities for players to exercise their role-playing skills in Victorian society.

Evaluation: *Gaslight* is another excellent COC product. However, the 1920s remains Chaosium's preferred setting for COC adventures. "The Yorkshire Horrors" is the only adventure available for *Gaslight*. Fortunately, standard 1920s adventures can be easily converted to the earlier setting with only a bit of work. After all, it's only 30 years earlier. With this slight reservation, *Gaslight* comes with my highest recommendation. Anyone interested in adventuring in the Age of Victoria should snap up a copy.

H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands

CALL OF CTHULHU supplement
136-page perfect-bound book, with three pages of color plates and a large two-

color fold-out map
Chaosium, Inc. \$18.95

Design: Sandy Petersen, Keith Herber, K. L. Campbell-Robson, Scott Clegg, Richard T. Launius, Mark Morrison, Phil Frances, Lynn Willis, Susan Hutchinson, Jacqueline Clegg, and Jeff Okamoto

Editing: Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis

Cover illustration: Raymond Bayless

Color plates: Tom Sullivan and Mark Roland

From the Victorian era to the world of dreams is only one short step. *H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* recreates the dream reality of stories such as "The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath," "Celephais," and "The Cats Of Ulthar." Investigators can enter into a wondrous world, but that world is also populated by its fair share of dark horrors. *Dreamlands* first appeared as a boxed set in 1986; this book edition replaces the boxed set and has been graced with color plates. *Dreamlands* presents two new skills for use in the Dreamlands and describes the lands various areas. New spells for use only in the Dreamlands are extensively described, along with the creatures that inhabit this fabulous world.

The meat of this book is dedicated to providing high-quality adventures for COC Investigators. The first, "To Sleep, Per-

chance To Dream," introduces Investigators to the possibilities of the Dreamlands. It leads them into the Enchanted Wood and beyond to the city of Ulthar. Here they can marvel at its wonders and use their new skills.

"Captives Of Two Worlds" is an adventure that spans the real world and the Dreamlands. Investigators discover that the Dreamlands can also be of use as a source of information in the course of their normal adventures.

The third adventure, "Pickman's Student" again takes the adventurers into the Dreamlands. It's an excellent blending of horror and the Dreamlands.

"Season Of The Witch" involves a witch who was executed centuries before, and now bides her time in the Dreamlands waiting for a chance to strike back at the real world. As the time draws near, the Investigators enter the scene to stop her.

The three previous adventures span the waking and the dreaming world; "Lemon Sails" takes place entirely in the Dreamlands. It takes the Investigators on a quest to aid a resident of the Dreamlands.

The final adventure, "The Land of Lost Dreams," neatly blends horror with dream reality and the Investigators' deepest fears and past failings. It requires players who really get into role-playing their characters, but it promises to be a very special adventure for those that do.

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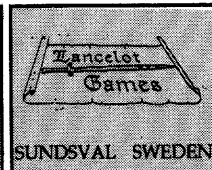
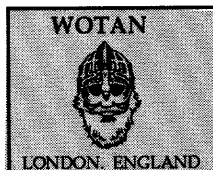
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Evaluation: *H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* greatly expands the options available to Keepers. Its resemblance to a fantasy world allows Keepers to let their Investigators enjoy a change of pace and emphasis. Rather than merely dwell on its fantastic aspect, the adventure authors have expertly integrated the horror of COC with the strange dream reality. *Dreamlands* is yet another great COC supplement.

S. Petersen's Field Guide to Creatures of the Dreamlands
CALL OF CTHULHU supplement


64-page perfect-bound book, with 30 pages of color plates
Chaosium, Inc. \$15.95
Design: Sandy Petersen
Editing and additional design: Lynn Willis
Illustrations: Mark J. Ferrari

This book is slickly produced and beautifully illustrated. Written by COC game designer Sandy Petersen, it takes a pseudo-academic look at the creatures that inhabit the Dreamlands. You'll find no gaming stats within its pages—just short descriptions of the creatures as though

written by a student of medieval metaphysics. But these are fun to read. Best of all are the illustrations by Mark J. Ferrari, which are nothing short of excellent.

Evaluation: S. Petersen's *Field Guide to Creatures of the Dreamlands* is a book that anyone who likes excellent artwork should have in their collection. The full-page plates are superb. They are also useful for showing to players as their Investigators encounter these creatures.

CALL OF CTHULHU game products are available from Chaosium, Inc., 950A 56th St., Oakland CA 94608, U.S.A. Ω




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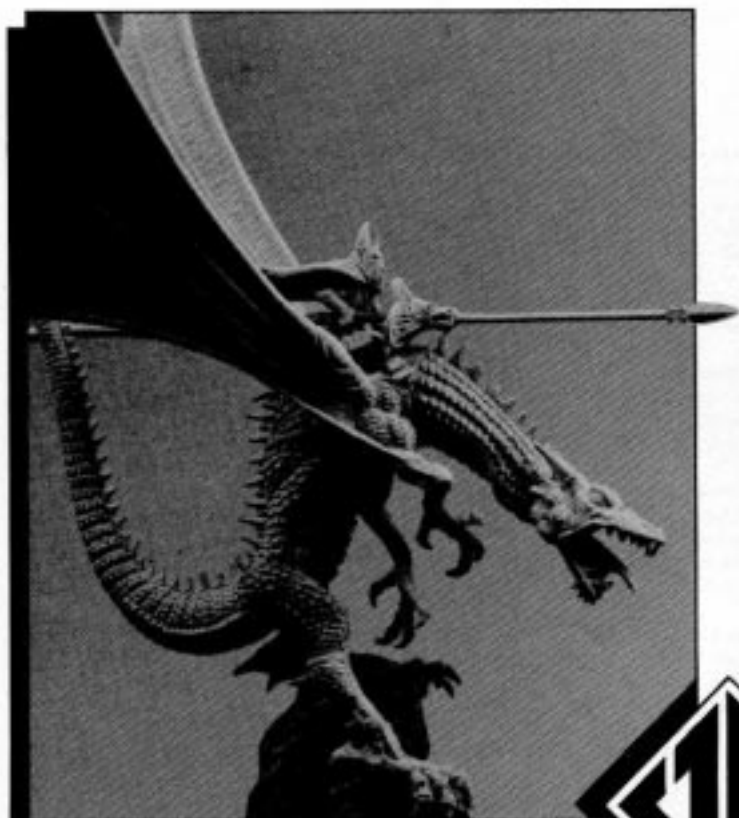




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Convention Calendar

Continued from page 79

I-KHAN, July 20-22

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn North in Colorado Springs, Colo. Special guest of honor will be Andrew J. Offutt. Tournaments include AD&D®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, CAR WARS®, SKY GALLEONS OF MARS®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include open gaming, a movie room, a pre-1960s movie theme costume contest, a dealers' room, a miniatures-painting contest, and our own version of **Highlander**: Registration: \$10 before June 20; \$15 thereafter, plus a \$1 fee per event. Write to: Miniatures Wargamers Guild, 2354 S. Academy Blvd., Colorado Springs CO 80916; or call Perry Rogers at (719) 392-2656.

CONJUNCTION, July 27-29

This convention will take place at New Hall College, Cambridge, England. The guest of honor will be Gregory Stafford. Events include no game tournaments, but there will be panels, a masquerade, films, and a dealers' area. There will also be combat demonstrations, live-action role-playing, PBMs, workshops, and a real ale bar. Membership is £12 for those over 18. Write to: CONJUNCTION, 27 Terront Road, London N15 3AA, UNITED KINGDOM; or call John Dallman at: 01-802-8723.

OKON '90, July 27-29

The region's largest SF convention will be held at the Camelot Hotel in Tulsa, Okla. Guests of honor include Hal Clement, Tom Kidd, Mark Simmons, David Lee Anderson, and Brad Sinor.

Events include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, and CAR WARS® games. Write to: OKON, P.O. Box 4229, Tulsa OK.

DARCON I, July 28

Sponsored by Darkstar Fantasy Concepts, this convention will be held at the Hillbrow Recreation Center in Johannesburg, South Africa. Events include AD&D® and SF games, various tournaments, and a dealers' room. Registration: R5 per player. Write to: DFC DARCON I, Evan Dempsey, 24 Vincent Rd., Rosettenville-ext, Johannesburg(Tvl), R.S.A., 2197.

GFR ROLEPLAYER DAYS '90, July 28-29

The Gilde der Fantasyrollenspieler proudly presents this convention at the Burgerschafthaus, Gorlinger Zentrum 15, Cologne (Koln), West Germany. Many games will be featured. Registration: DM 6/day or DM 10/weekend. Write to: GTR, c/o Bernd Streckman, Bruchstr. 48, 4030 Ratingen 1, West Germany.

DALLASCON '90, August 3-5

The southwest's largest gaming convention will be held at the Le Baron Hotel on Regal Row in Dallas, Tex. Tournaments include AD&D® and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include WARHAMMER®, SHADOWRUN®, CHAMPIONS®, AXIS & ALLIES®, and ROLEMASTER® games, as well as seminars, an auction, a painting contest, and a dealers' room. Send an SASE to: DALLASCON '90, P.O. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086.

FAMILYCON I, August 3-5

This family-oriented convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Timonium, Md. Activities include a dealers' room, hands-on science programming, and SF and fantasy panels for all ages. Write to: FAMILYCON, 3309 Taney Rd., Baltimore MD 21215.

I-CON I, August 3-5

Victoria's first SF convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Victoria, B.C., Canada. Guests of honor include Michael G. Coney, Donna Barr, and Nichelle Nichols. Events include panels, an art show-and auction, videos, gaming, a writers' workshop, art and costuming demonstrations, a diplomatic reception, a masquerade, two dances, a dealers' room, and live theatre. Registration: \$25 Canadian (\$23 U.S.) until June 15; and \$30 Canadian (\$28 U.S.) thereafter. Dealers are welcome. Write to: I-CON, P.O. Box 30004, 104-3995 Quadra St., Victoria, B.C., CANADA V8X 5E1; or call: (604) 389-1123.

OMACON X, August 3-5

This pro-space, gaming, and comic convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central in Omaha, Neb., and is sponsored by Nebraskans for the Advancement of Space Development. Guests of honor include Rick Sternbach, John Ford, Bjo Trimble, and Art Bozlee. Write to: OMACON, P.O. Box 37851, Omaha NE 68137.

CAPITOL-CON VI, August 4-5

This event will be held at the Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield, Ill. Featured events include board and miniatures war gaming, FRPGs, vendors, and a used-game auction. Write to: Bill Wilson, 99 Cottonwood Dr., Chatham IL 62623; or call (217) 483-5797 or (217) 523-0916.

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GAME-FEST XI, August 15-19

This 11th-annual convention will be held in historic Old Town in San Diego, Calif. The over 50 gaming events include AD&D®, D&D®, AVALON HILL CLASSICS®, BATTLETECH®, CAR WARS®, TMN TURTLES®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, MONOPOLY®, and AXIS & ALLIES® games, with painting shows and more. Registration: \$20 before August 10 (includes coupon book for on-site purchases), or \$30 at the door. Write to: GAME-FEST XI, 3954 Harney St., San Diego CA 92110; or call (619) 291-1666.

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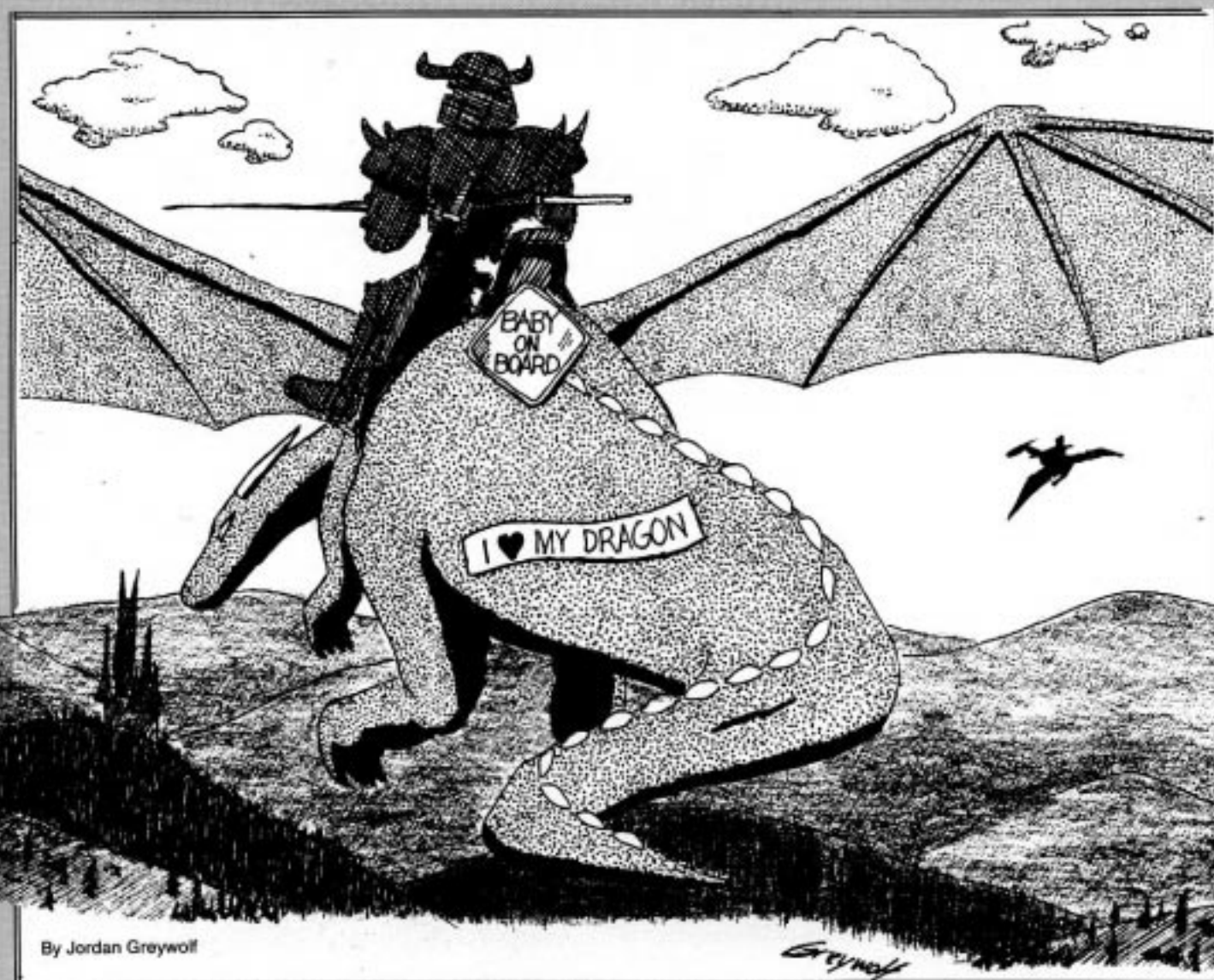
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The Rules

Continued from page 70

comer to an AD&D game has read Tolkien, you could say that that Aragorn was lawful good, Frodo was neutral good, and Tom Bombadil and Galadriel exemplify two different views of chaotic goodness. Similar archetypes appear in most fantasy literature.

New characters should always be good aligned. Only a skillful role-player can portray a villain without behaving like a psychopath, and new players usually feel uncomfortable about willfully choosing to be "evil." Do not make lawful or good alignments sound prudish. Almost all fictional heroes, even dashing scoundrels, would have been good guys in fantasy games. Use Robin Hood as an example.

New players should not buy equipment before the adventure; they seldom know what a mace is, much less a bec-de-corbin. Instead, let each character buy what he wants after the game begins. The PCs should probably begin in a small town, where they can buy equipment without the distraction a city offers. This not only starts the game faster, it lets new players discover for themselves what they will need. It also lets them experiment with role-playing without endangering the entire party. If the new PC teases a shopkeeper, he may have to borrow somebody else's iron spikes. If the new PC insults a dragon, everybody in the party might get roasted.

When the player has a character, either newly rolled or pregenerated, analyze its strengths and weaknesses aloud. For example, "You're strong and clever, but somewhat unattractive. This character might make a good warrior? Usually, one or two sentences is enough. However, if the new player seems interested in your description, you might add some background from your campaign, such as: "You were born in the Barbarous Plains. That makes you an unsurpassed horseman—and a fierce-warrior."

On with the game!

Try to start the game within 20 minutes. If the new player still seems confused, just say, "Tell me what your character wants to do." As the new player watches more experienced players role-play, he will probably begin to understand the game. New players often try to wheedle hints from the GM. If this occurs, keep him from becoming frustrated, but make it clear that PCs have to solve their own problems. When the new PC is in a party with experienced adventurers, get them to give advice to the new guy. If nobody in the party can help, try to have an NPC provide the answer or at least make up some reason to offer information. Maybe the new PC heard a bard's song about a similar situation or was warned about it as an apprentice. Most people learn board

games by making random moves whenever it is their turn, thus gradually finding out what the rules allow. In role-playing games, this "turn" may never come. Whenever a new player seems ignored, the GM should ask the newcomer what action his character wants to take. If possible, force the new PC to do something heroic—alone.

During the game, a new player will face most typical game processes, such as combat tables, "plusses to hit," and terms such as "PC," "NPC," "player," and "GM" or "DM." Keep the game going, but give a short explanation of each such concept. Usually a sentence is enough, such as: "This is the eight-sided die." Explain dice mechanics as early as possible, including percentile rolls and abbreviations (like "3d6").

New players learn best by playing, whether they completely understand the rules or not. Once the new player feels comfortable role-playing, you may introduce more complex rules. You can start by showing the entire party the module they just explored (assuming you aren't going to use it again). All players, new and old, enjoy hearing about things that might have happened and how clever they were to evade the many enemies who opposed them. This also gives you an excuse to talk about spells, treasure, maps, monsters, game balance, and all other features of a typical adventure. However, avoid talking too much or giving more answers than the new player wants. Keep the new player interested!

After the first adventure, new players need personalized characters. They know enough to use one properly now and should start accumulating memories and experience points. If you used a prerolled character, take it back and help your student roll up a new one if he wants (or let him keep the prerolled one and play that if he likes it). Even when the new player has already rolled up a character, he will need statistics for height, weight, and anything else you ignored before. Let the new player know that a PC leads an imaginary life in your campaign world and exists even when not adventuring. Give a new PC a history, friends, enemies, and living expenses.

A new player becomes an expert by glancing through the rule books, turning rules and ideas into a vision of the game. If you dare, lend new players your rule books. Otherwise, let them skim rules during slow parts of the game or arrange a trip to some bookstore that allows browsing. You can also recommend fiction that represents your campaign. Be ready to suggest which books the new player should buy, but remember that newcomers are usually not ready to spend much money. New players will probably not use anything more than the rule books allowed for players to use. Of course, a beginner can play with nothing but dice.

Special warning: Be aware that the AD&D game is *not* an "advanced" version of the D&D® game. Some people recom-

mend that novice AD&D game players learn the D&D Basic Set rules first. However, these are two entirely different games, each quite complex but not using the same rules system. Either one is fine in itself, but confusing them will only lead to serious frustration later! Similar problems might exist with other game systems that were revised in later editions—e.g., Game Designers' Workshop's TRAVELLER®, MEGATRAVELLER®, and the since-renamed TRAVELLER: 2300™ games (the latter now being the 2300 AD™ game). Know your rules!

When you introduce the rules, avoid scaring beginners with gargantuan piles of books. Newcomers should respect the rules but not feel compelled to memorize them. You can compare role-playing rules to the Chance and Community Chest cards in Parker Brothers' MONOPOLY® game; players must obey them but do not have to study each one in advance. New players should know that role-playing games constantly change and expand. Explain that since players want rules for anything that might ever happen, new guidelines will always be possible. You might even encourage beginners to design optional rules of their own. This can mollify players who envy the GM's license to "cheat."

There are certain mistakes that almost all beginners make, and GMs should watch for and correct these. For example: In the AD&D and D&D game systems, remind newcomers that lower armor classes are more protective; therefore, a suit of *plate* mail + 1 actually subtracts one point from the wearer's armor class. Also, emphasize that shields improve a character's armor class by one—*not* reduce it to -1. New players need to know that "monster" often means nothing more than "NPC"—any nonplayer character.

When a game uses foreign currencies or imaginary money, watch moneychanging closely. Most new players have a very hard time converting gold pieces to silver or dollars to francs. Some GMs just call gold pieces "dollars," but if you let new players develop a habit of this, they will probably never stop, and that makes the game seem slightly less realistic.

The novice adventure

A new player forms countless prejudices and expectations during the first game. You should use this opportunity to shape the new player into the sort of gamer you want in your campaign. Use a wide variety of challenges and settings. If the entire adventure takes place underground, a newcomer might not understand that any surface world exists.

The first adventure must accomplish three things. First, it should demonstrate the game. This is why you need a varied assortment of encounters. Second, it should summarize your campaign world. Let the new PCs meet important NPCs and expose them to the stories, geographical features, etc., of your milieu. Third, it

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should build expectations for the next game. The new players should face some exciting challenge and overcome it. Do not let the new player PCs fail, because in the first game it is more important for new players to feel triumphant than to enforce every rule of game balance. Have the beginners find a small reward; even a few silver coins will excite them. Then make them anticipate even better successes. Let them learn about magical items to lust for and expensive luxuries that they would buy if only they were rich. PCs will pursue these things for lifetimes.

The first adventure should have a simple plot. Since the new players do not understand the rules yet, they should not have to concentrate on understanding your storyline. This innocence lets you use all the fun tricks that experienced players might consider hackneyed. New players feel proud to be hired by the village chieftain, and animated skeletons still terrify them. Fantasy-game GMs could also see the introductory D&D modules B11 *King's Festival* and B12 *Queen's Harvest* for other novice-level adventure ideas.

The GM cannot tell a new player every thing, and new players remember things much more completely when they teach themselves. Unfortunately, most rule books assume that their readers can role-play. Therefore, this article includes a short introduction to role-playing in the following section. Have the new player read this section, and if he becomes interested in a game, so much the better!

How to play

Most games simulate something people want to do. Perhaps they recreate emotions, like triumph. Maybe they demand certain skills, like military strategy. Chess, for example, is almost exactly like war. And there is a type of game, called a role-playing game, which tries to simulate all of life. The players assume the parts of characters in a story, and all of their experiences are played out in conversation. Playing a role-playing game is like creating a fantasy, science-fiction, or adventure story from the players' imaginations. The characters that the players control have a task or conflict to resolve during each game session. The game, like life, does not always end with a winner or a loser. Some game sessions end well, with the players getting what they want, but others prove to be more difficult.

The setting and plot of an RPG session are invented by one player—the game master, or GM. The GM prepares long before the game by making up the plot and goals of the story. Work like this is much like writing fiction—but the GM does not decide how it will end. The GM draws a map of the imaginary area where the game is supposed to take place and writes a description of various locations on the map, as if for an encyclopedia. One place might be a tomb guarded by evil spirits, while another might be a peaceful

farm. The GM will reuse this map in many games. In this way, a campaign develops—a continuing plot with a consistent theme, like a long novel.

As mentioned, the other players take the roles of characters in the story. It is important to distinguish between “players” and “characters.” A player is a real person who plays the game. A character is one of the people in the story. The characters that the players control are called player characters, or PCs. Everybody else in the story is invented and controlled by the GM. These people are called non-player characters, or NPCs.

You play an RPG by talking. The GM describes the background for the story and what each PC sees and hears. After considering this, the players tell the GM what they want their characters to do; these actions can be anything that a real person might do. The GM then describes the results. By using the map, the rule books, and common sense, the GM tells the players where their PCs are and what happens to them.

At some point, a character will want to do something that he might not be able to do. For example, if a PC shoots an arrow at a target, he might hit or miss. Dice rolls are used to simulate these chances. The results are compared with tables that show how difficult these feats are. Ideally, there would be tables for everything a PC might ever do in a game. Some game systems have an incredible number of rule books and gaming materials. Many beginning players complain that this is too much to read. The truth is, almost nobody knows all the rules. Players have their PCs do whatever they want and look up rules when they are needed. Creating a believable, exciting tale is more important than following the books. Often, a GM is forced to invent new rules to cover unique situations.

Different sorts of dice appear in various role-playing games. These dice often do not have pips—dots showing what number you have rolled. Rather, each die face has an Arabic digit, such as 2 or 19. The most commonly used dice have four, six, eight, ten, twelve, and twenty sides. (Ten-sided dice are sometimes numbered zero (10) through nine.) In descriptions of role-playing, dice rolls are often abbreviated with the letters “D” or “d.” Notations on dice rolls usually involve two parts. First is a number showing the number of rolls to be made, then a number showing how many sides that the dice to be rolled must have. Rolling 3d6 means rolling three six-sided dice and adding the results from each die into a total score. Dice rolls can also be abbreviated by giving the range of the appropriate die; for example, a roll of 1d6 is often abbreviated 1-6, and 2d12 is 2-24.

There are also references to d100 or percentile dice, which are used to generate a number between one and 100. Two ten-sided dice are usually used, of two different colors. One color is the tens die, and the other is the ones die. The same die

can also be rolled twice, first for the tens digit, then for the ones digit. Thus, if the first roll is a 3 and the next roll is a 2, the number generated is 32. If the first number was 0 and the second was 3, the result is 3. Rolls of 0 and 0 represent 100. Percentile rolls are useful when a chance is expressed as a percent. If a PC has a 60% chance of swimming, 1d100 is rolled. If the number is above 60, the character cannot swim; if the roll is 60 or below, the character can. Percentile dice are also used to roll large random numbers.

Before the game, players fill out character sheets which describe their PCs. There are many things to know about a character. Is he strong, weak, clever, or stupid? What sort of skills does the character have? Some of these things are determined by rolling dice, and others are selected by the player.

Basic attributes like strength, intelligence, and dexterity are called ability scores, and one generates them by rolling dice. A PC is trained for a certain profession, such as fighter, thief, or magic-user in fantasy games. The player may choose what sort of job his character is trained for. In many games, PCs might not be human, so a player may also get to choose his PC's race, such as elf, dwarf, or gnome. As a PC plays the game, he will gain experience and become more skilled at whatever he does. Experience is measured in experience points, which are awarded for completing successful adventures. When a character has enough experience points, he may gain levels, increasing his personal powers. High-level characters often gain new skills and can improve their old ones. The same character can be reused in many adventures. Eventually, characters develop complete histories, as if they were real people.

Dice, rule books, and paper are the only equipment needed for playing RPGs. Some players collect tiny lead figurines which resemble their characters. These are props and can be moved around to simulate what is happening in an adventure. However, you do not need figures to play.

Although fantasy games are used most often here in examples, role-playing games have been written to recreate adventures of all sorts, including stories involving medieval fantasy and ancient mythology, modern espionage, postnuclear ruins, science-fiction starships, Vietnam war patrols, 1920s gangsters, and cartoon comedies. The rules for different games will vary, and few will use the same terms, rules, and equipment. But if you can play one RPG, you can play any of them.

The most important rule for learning how to play an RPG is this: If you don't know, ask. You can learn any RPG by watching how the other players act in the game, but always feel free to ask questions. The more you know about a game, the better you can play it and the more fun you'll have.

And the fun is worth it, too.

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Through the LOOKING Glass

How *not* to run a miniatures campaign

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I have received many letters asking what became of the campaign for FASA's BATTLETECH® game that we featured in DRAGON® issue #144. Many asked for rules sets and guidelines so the writers could launch campaigns of their own. Regretfully, the campaign no longer exists in the form presented last year. When we set up the game, everything was geared toward C-bills, using the guidelines that FASA had published. The game went along very well for a while, then hit the proverbial stone wall. By the time everyone had finished their first six contracts, the paperwork and math was enough to ruin anyone's day. At that point, we stopped the campaign and are now about to get a simpler version running.

The best possible game using miniatures is often a campaign game. This forces players to use strategy instead of banzai tactics. A player who wins battles by throwing sheer numbers into the fight usually will not be able to win the long-term game because his army is gutted early on. Even though campaign games look easy, successful campaigns depend on sound rules and planning to succeed. The following are the simplest rules:

Rule #1: The most important rule of any miniatures campaign is to be as completely familiar with the material as possible, as well as the history, rules, time period, and ideas behind the campaign. As the judge, you should always have as much general knowledge as any of the players. You probably will get stumped on some specific questions as nobody can know everything about a specific period or game. But if you try to buffalo people, your campaign is doomed before it begins. Also know your players and how they act before starting. This will allow you to anticipate problems and avoid them.

Rule #2: Also important is the use of the KIS principle, a handy rule of thumb that means "keep it simple." The harder you make the game, the faster it will come to a screeching halt. Complexity often leads to more interesting and accurate games, but the more complex it is, the more time

someone has to spend on paperwork and stats, and the less time he gets to play. Unless you can hire a general staff for everyone, don't make a campaign that requires one.

Rule #3: Have more than one judge whenever possible. Campaigns can die very quickly with only one judge. If that judge is sick or has other commitments, it can mean long-term or frequent game interruptions. After this happens a few times, gamers might quit out of frustration, and you will either have to start the campaign over or find new people who must be brought up to speed. To avoid this, never start a campaign unless there are either multiple judges or a backup system. In our new BATTLETECH campaign, there are two judges, both of whom can play, and army additions must be approved by the judges or two members of opposing houses. The builder does not have to report where he is putting his additions; he just tells what he wishes to build. This system forces the individual to pay more attention to what he is creating, and the houses pay closer attention to the game as they might one day have to fight the unit being created. Very few mistakes are made or missed with this set-up.

Rule #4: Make sure that any forms that are needed for the campaign are available in abundance. As a rule of thumb, you should have enough forms on hand for set-up and six months use. This also leads handily into the next item.

Rule #5: Figure out a budget for the campaign and get the money needed for any printing, scenery, buildings, etc. before you start. It has been my experience that everyone wants to play and promises to pay—until it is time to "ante up" after the game has started. Failure to have these funds can be the death of your game.

Rule #6: Make sure that the sides are even. This is one of the most important parts of any campaign. Pick some form of point system or means of evaluating units and make sure that everyone starts with equal forces. In BATTLETECH games, you can use tonnage. In historical war games, you can use the point system found in most sets of rules. Unless you are gaming

in a specific time period or unusual situation that demands unequal distribution of forces, there is no faster way to end a campaign than to have it unevenly divided at the start.

Rule #7: Make sure everyone agrees on the rules to be used in the game (or at least that everyone will abide by the judge's rulings). This seems like a strange statement, but you'll always have at least one person who interprets the rules differently. Have several meetings to discuss the rules and listen carefully to your players' comments and questions. If everyone appears confused, maybe the rules aren't clear enough. If everyone wants off-the-wall conversions or units, maybe your standards need to be tightened and a different approach taken. Learn from your players; your game is a partnership with them, and if either partner fails, the game will fail.

Rule #8: Don't build unattainable objectives into your campaign. Conquering a country is nice, but if it completely guts someone's army it isn't going to appeal to anyone. Work out different levels of victory and have them available to each side when you start, so everyone can plan strategy.

Rule #9: Arrange your campaign to have flexibility. It is helpful for you as the judge to arrange one night or day per week as "turn hand-in" or mapping time, but it also helps to allow the players to set up meeting times for battles at their own convenience. If there are many conflicts to be resolved, allow adequate time between mapping or "turn hand-in" nights to make sure everything for that turn is finished up. Be sure that you have penalties for missing a turn, as there are always procrastinators who can ruin your game by not doing their turns or fighting their battles. Such things as "die roll" battles with huge negative modifiers applied to the missing side are possible solutions.

Rule #10: Lastly, arrange the campaign with one of its objectives being "fun." While campaigns are always more intense than single games, keep the amount of work involved down as much as possible. If it's not fun, why do it?

I don't think I've ever seen a campaign that neatly follows all of these guidelines. Even I am guilty of slaughtering one or several of these very general rules. But I guarantee that the more rules you follow, the easier and smoother your campaign will run, and the more your players will enjoy it.

Reviews

Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

West End Games

RD 3, Box 2345
Honesdale PA 18431

WEG 40302—Imperial

Forces set

**** ½

West End Games' STAR WARS® universe continues to expand. The Imperial Forces set submitted for review represents a group of "bad guys" for use with the role-playing game or for collecting. These miniatures are sculpted and molded for West End by Grenadier Models. The set presents a group of 10 figures from the crew of the Imperial Death Star. The set can be broken up into four categories:

Group #1: Stormtroopers—What would a STAR WARS game be without a good battle? This group of three Imperial Stormtroopers is ready to provide one. Each soldier wears the characteristic jointed armor from the movies. One Stormtrooper is moving semi-crouched, easing forward to scout and avoid getting hit. The second 'trooper is walking forward with his blaster obviously ready to fire. The third is standing with his blaster in a ready position. All three figures were without flash, and the details held up well for painting.

Group #2: This group consists of a pilot team: one fighter pilot and one Imperial 'droid. The fighter pilot wears a helmet with communications gear by his ear and a respirator unit strapped to his chest with air hoses going to his mouthpiece. The pilot's faceplate obscures 'much of his facial detail. He carries a blaster in his lowered right hand and wears coveralls secured by a belt at the waist and tucked into his boots. The Imperial 'droid has visible power connections and flex joints. Its face narrows down to a nosepiece which looks like a funnel, though otherwise it looks like C3P0. The robot should be either black or white. Some instrument panels are on its front and back, but I couldn't discern much of the detail. There was no flash on either figure, and molding is crisp.

Group #3: This group consists of one officer and two enlisted types from the Death Star's crew. The officer is either instructing someone on a task or else pointing something out. The officer wears a forage cap that extends to his ear and has a very small brim. The figure's facial detail is not as good as the other figures reviewed in this group. He has a wrap-around jacket secured by a belt at the waist; a medal appears on his chest.

The Death Star trooper wears a long half-teardrop helmet with a chin strap but no faceplate. His face protector is raised, and his face is well detailed. He wears gauntlets and has a gun ready to fire in his right hand. His long-sleeved tunic extends below his waist, and his pants are tucked into his boots.

The Death Star gunner is dressed like the 'trooper, though he wears padded



STAR WARS® Imperial Forces set (West End Games)

Photography by Michael Bethke

armor and his faceplate is down. A gun is held in his left hand. Many pockets appear on his armor.

The remaining two figures are the high commanders of the Empire. One is Grand Moff Tarkin. Tarkin has his hands behind his back in a parade-rest pose. His head is bare, and his hair is short; a serious look appears on his face. He too wears a wrap-around jacket secured at the waist with a belt and buttons on the front. A row of decorations is on the upper left side of his jacket. He wears a simple pair of pants and boots. There was some flash between his arms and body.

Last, but not least, is Darth Vader himself. Vader is nearly identical to his appearance the movies, except for his helmet, which does not flare out nearly as much at the bottom. His lightsaber came out well, as did his arms. The only problems with the figure were a mold line that ran diagonally on both front and back and a slight leg defect that was easily fixed.

I highly recommend these figures to anyone who is either a *Star Wars* fan or a player of the role-playing game. These figures will help certain gaming scenarios but are of more limited use on a long-term basis. They are good for dioramas as well. This set sells for \$12.

In Service Miniatures

P.O. Box 510
Lakewood CA 90714-0510

6039—SA-12 Gladiator half battery with control ****

One of the most important goals of any modern army is to gain control of the skies. In BATTLETECH games, aerospace fighters duke it out to prevent raids. On the modern battlefield, control is gained and held by an interlocking antiaircraft chain of guns, planes, and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).

The models submitted for review are scale copies of a system now being extensively introduced in the USSR. The SA-12 system has been billed as a replacement for the old SA-4, which is over 20 years old. These missiles are designed to knock aircraft out from low to very high altitudes and have a reputed range of 175 miles with

a fair degree of accuracy, depending on what source-of military information you read. These missiles are not offensive weapons, but they can reputedly destroy such weapons as cruise missiles or high-flying bombers. The missile batteries are usually deployed 10-20 km behind the lines.

The miniatures presented for review make up one-half of the organization listed in several unclassified Department of Defense reports for this weapon. The package contains six vehicles, of which two are search and target-acquisition radar units, two are actual missile launchers, one is a reload vehicle, and one is a command vehicle. In addition to the basic vehicles, add-on equipment is also present. All vehicles are based on the same Soviet vehicle, which has six road wheels and four return rollers to keep the truck stable and running smoothly. Each vehicle is different but uses this basic chassis-and-cab design.

The launching units require the most assembly. The launchers can be built in either the launching or the carrying 'position. The launching position has the two "tubes" and the radar pointing straight up, while the carrying position has the "tubes" and radar down on the truck. The radar vehicles give you the same choice but have guide holes on the model to show you where the radar goes. If you want the units to be in a "moving" position, you must clip off part of each radar unit's base peg. If you want them in the ready position, you will have to fill two of the deck holes on each model with putty.

The reload vehicle carries four reloads and a crane. Both it and the command unit come in one piece and require no assembly.

This is a good set of vehicles with virtually no flash. Mold pitting appears on the decks of some of the vehicles, but many of the tool boxes show through well. In addition to the set's use on a modern battlefield, you could use it for BATTLETECH games as a mobile AC 30 team or a PPC team. With the radar and sensing arrays, they could even be cruise-missile or LRM launchers. I highly recommend these vehicles, which sell for \$4.75 per pack.

Game Designer's Workshop

P.O. Box 1646

Bloomington IL 61702-1646

GDW 1821—Victorian Adventurers

The SPACE: 1889™ game continues to be a bridge between historical and fantasy role-playing. With the addition of the Victorian Adventurers set, you can now add town and village conflicts to battles otherwise fought only between rebellious tribes and soldiers of the British Empire. Many of the military actions taken during the real-worlds Colonial period were justified as being relief or safety columns for civilians, missionaries, or traders caught in the middle of a hostile area. Using this justification, many of the colonial powers extended their influences over vast territories.

The set submitted for review consists of 10 unpainted metal figures, created by RAFM for GDW. The bases are a little small for the figures but will hold them up as long as there isn't a role-playing earthquake. A description of each figure follows:

1. Army officer with revolver—This 25 mm figure has calf-length boots with grooves where the bootlaces ought to be. His pants have a slightly raised seam for the necessary stripe. The jacket has the typical narrow officer's shoulder boards and prominent buttons. From his narrow belt hangs a holster and a sword in its scabbard; the officer grasps the sword hilt. His cross strap is visible, as is the cartridge or map case, decorations, and other details. His garrison-type hat has clean detail on its insignia and strap. The face is clean shaven, and there is some pitting on the right side of the face as if from an old case of acne. The pistol in the figure's right hand is too thick.

2. Army officer with sword—This officer

Victorian Adventurers
(Game Designer's Workshop)



is much like the first one, though he has smooth boots, a holstered pistol, and an aggressive stance with his sword out in a challenging position. His helmet has screen wrapping and an insignia. A moustache flares out near the corners of his mouth. The facial features on this figure are very good. The only problem with this figure is the sword, which is too thick—a very common problem on miniatures.

3. Naval officer—This officer represents a typical sea-going officer. He wears a double-breasted waistcoat held by a belt with an engraved buckle. The buttons stand out well against the coat and are easy to paint. The top of the coat shows a shirt with a flared collar and bow tie. His baggy pants have the typical seam stripe, and he wears low-top boots. His right hand clutches a spy glass. His sleeves bear the three rings and loop of the old naval captain. The cap is the pillbox type with wide brim and bill. His face is serene, with a bushy moustache and sideburns. His sword hangs in its scabbard on the left.

4. Inventor with pistol—This civilian figure wears regular trousers, low shoes, and an open suit coat. Revealed under the coat is a button-down shirt and a string tie. In his left hand the inventor holds a four-shot derringer in the manner of a starting gun, and in his right he holds a device that looks like a detector of some sort. On his head is a hat of the type made famous by Sherlock Holmes. His mouth is set in a grim expression; he has good facial character and long sideburns.

5. Thug—This "gentleman" is obviously looking for trouble and intends to find it. He has a muscular build covered by an open shirt front that shows a muscle-molded T-shirt beneath. His long wrinkled pants are slightly bunched on the tops of his shoes and are held up by not only a belt but by suspenders as well. A rag hangs from his rear pocket. His right hand is made into a fist, and with his left hand he is rolling up his right sleeve. He wears an ugly scowl.

6. Missionary—This fellow is working hard at bringing Christianity to the natives. He is dressed in a single-breasted suit jacket that shows a regular shirt and tie beneath it. In his left hand he holds an open Bible, and in his right he holds a cross aloft. His face is partially hidden by a Van Dyke beard and moustache, but a look of happiness is evident. He also wears a pith helmet with a wide sash.

7. Lady with revolver—This is one nonsense female. Her hair is pulled back into the bun that was common in the late 19th century, with one or two curls falling onto her forehead. Small earrings are visible on both ears. The facial detail is excellent, giving a very vivid impression of a woman who has had too many bad experiences, hence her grim appearance. She wears a long dress with puffed sleeves and a handkerchief around her neck. The dress stretches down to her high-topped shoes. She holds her revolver with both hands.

8. Lady in traveling clothes—This is a gal

in a hurry. The figure is posed as if moving quickly and glancing to the side. She wears a long formal dress that stretches from her shoulders down to the ground, leaving just enough room for one sharp-toed shoe to poke out. The dress has short sleeves and frills. A handbag is held in her right hand, and her left hand is reaching out. Her short hair is covered by a hat with a wide brim. Earrings are visible on both ears, and her face looks vaguely like a young Queen Elizabeth. With the dress pulled tight in the right places as if she were running, it is clear that the sculptor took a great deal of time and effort with this figure.

9. Gentleman in top hat—This fellow was typecast as an arch-villain, a perfect representation of the landlord shown in the old silent pictures. He poses regally, facing forward with a mirthless demeanor, and a monocle covers his right eye. His short beard, without sideburns or moustache, gives him an odd look. His curly hair is covered mostly by a stovepipe hat. His suit coat is open at the front, exposing a vest complete with several buttons and a watch chain. His trousers hang straight, with no creases, down to his formal shoes. In his right hand he holds a walking stick with head and tip, and in his right hand he holds the lapel on his coat as if posing.

10. Hill Martian nomad—This figure is immense compared to the others in the set. His build is stocky with sharp, angular musculature on all four limbs and chest. His arms are bare from shoulders to forearms, where engraved bracers begin. In his right hand he holds a halberd-type weapon, and in his left hand is a sword with a hooked end. His chest and back are covered by armor plates that extend down to knee level but leave his legs free. The front and back plates of the armor are held together by a belt that also holds another sword, a pouch, and the scabbard for the large sword. His feet are clad in sandals with fringed tops, and his hair is blown back as though in a wind. His expression is grim and foreboding.

Also included in this set is a detailed painting guide. This guide suggests different color schemes for the figures and also has a full set of directions on how to paint these figures using the stain method. This is a method which takes some practice, so read the instructions carefully and practice on another figure using water-based paints first.

With the exception of the nomad, these figures are excellent reproductions of people from our past. The work is very well done and matches many of my books perfectly for the colonial period. These are premium figures that can be painted up to present an unending series as possible scenarios in either real-world colonial settings or the fantasy colonial period of SPACE: 1889 games. If nothing else, I recommend that you pick up these figures for displaying for their wealth of detail. You can be proud of them. They are only sold as a set for \$10.95.





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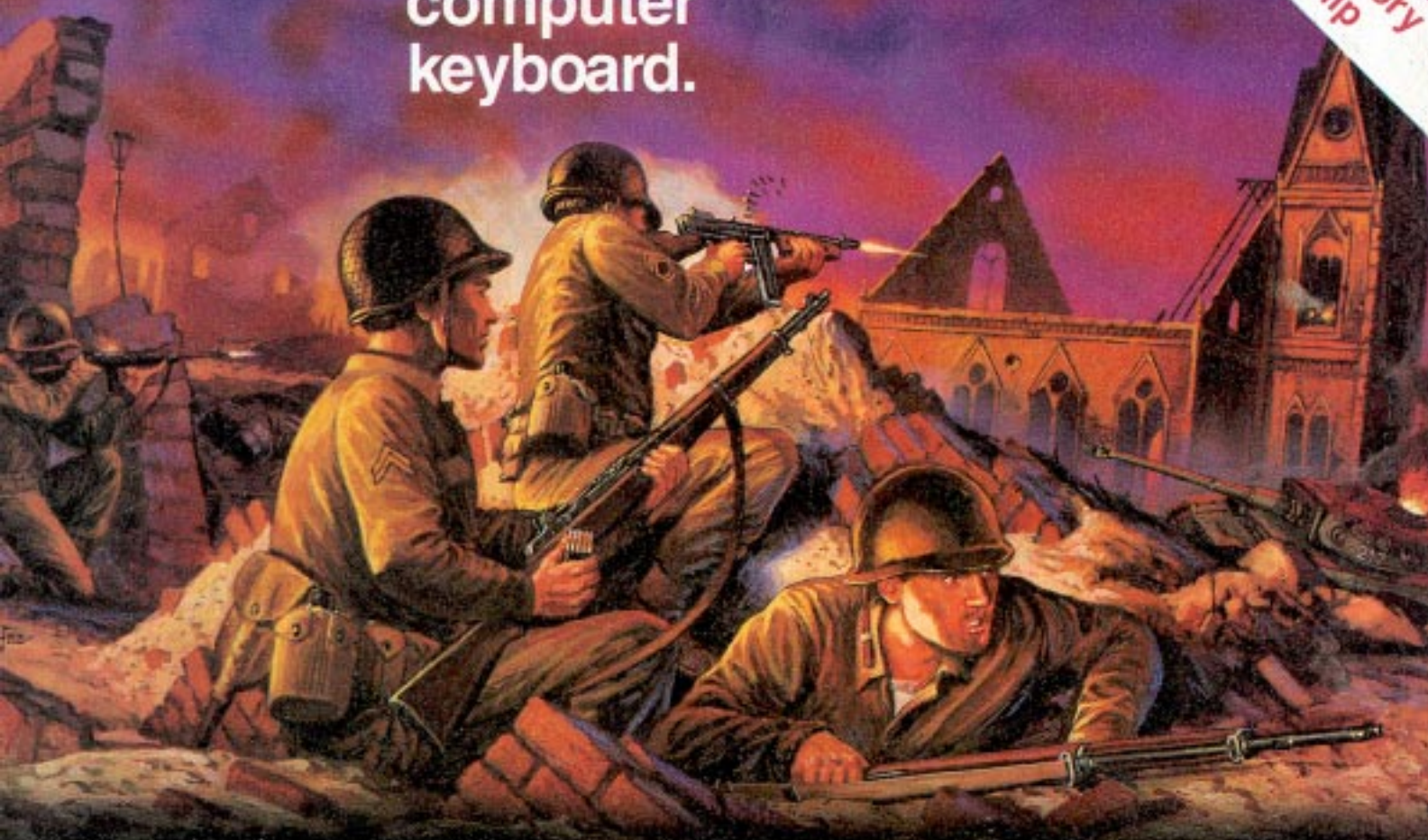
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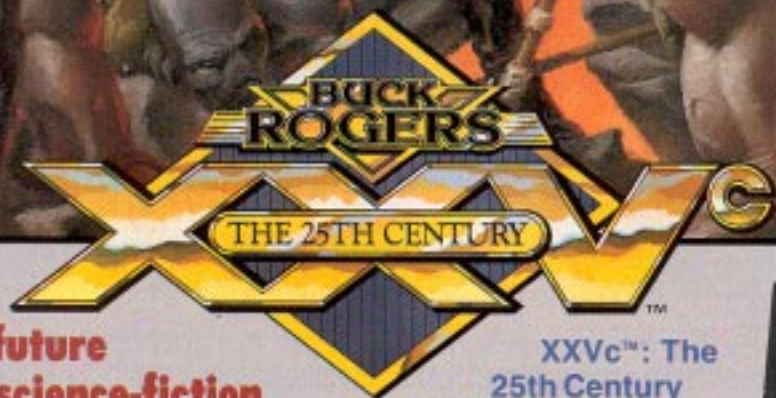


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